The Price of Dawning Day

T. Gavan Duffy

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LIGUORI MISSION HOUSE

THE PRICE OF DAWNING DAY

A "COMMON-HOUSE" OF THE BA-HNAR PEOPLE

THE PRICE
OF
DAWNING DAY

By

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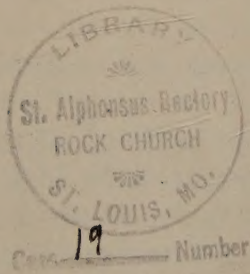

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PREFACE

We expect the sun to rise each morning without much help from us. And so it does. But are we thereby justified in supposing that the Sun of Justice follows the same law? No. And if the bulk of humankind still sits in darkness and the shadow of death, the fault lies largely with us followers (but far too distant followers) of Christ.

In all the annals of the modern missionary movement, there is hardly any story better calculated, as it seems to me, to show how greatly the message of Christ depends on us for its diffusion, than the history here presented. The fulfilling of Christ's Passion by His disciples, for the salvation of the Ba-Hnar people, tells us Missioners in the field what coöperation is expected on our part in the travail of Redemption; and it should hint to every Catholic (and that is the purpose of this book) how needful are his and her sacrifices to the sum total of salvation.

Next, the dawn of Christianity for any people

is not marked by the coming of the foreign preacher; the Day of Faith breaks only when that people is represented at the Altar of the Universal Sacrifice by a Priest of its own blood. But how much of pain and hope and supplication, how much of effort and patience and apparent failure — how much, too, of the Communion of Saints — goes to the dawning of that Day and to the making of that first Priest, it is the purpose of this story to convey.

And lastly, these pages are a protest. It is a modern failing to vivisect every Cause with the scalpel of statistics. And yet the missionary spirit is something quite independent of results. A common (and utterly false) argument is this: "If you, Father X., are reaching fewer souls in your missionary life than you would reach in a home parish, you are wasting your priesthood." To which I see but one reply — that a foot-rule will not reveal the height of Calvary, nor the sun and moon mark the measure of God's Grace.

T. Gavan Duffy,

Pondicherry,

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PART I

THE PRICE OF DAWNING DAY

Chapter I

GOOD BUSINESS.

The elephants had been restless ever since the moon came up — I mean unusually restless. Not content with shifting their great bulk from foot to foot, with ceaseless, rhythmic swing, they had been fretfully crossing ivories and passing anxious trunks up and down each other's flanks, and tugging at their thongs. Yet Kiem knew well enough that elephants are not hysterical.

Then, too, there had been untoward winging of great birds among the leafage; strange feathers had flashed with glory across the spaces where the moonbeams came slanting between the trees. Yet Kiem was well aware that the night-birds are not gold, nor white and red, nor blue — but black and tan, or grey.

And, above all, there was his dream. He did not like it. Among these forest-folk dreams are the shadows cast before coming events, and, though his favourite wizard had assured him, at early dawn, that this particular dream was happy and that surely something good was on its way to him, he felt uneasy.

He bade his servants let loose the elephants; and instantly the three great animals, waiting for neither fodder nor caress, sped off beneath the trees, which, towering hundreds of feet above, dwarfed the receding forms to midget-like proportions and very soon the bamboo brush-wood hid them altogether.

Kiem waited till he heard them splash through the neighbouring torrent; then, taking up his bow and a quiver full of arrows, he started out to hunt. He would soon test the nature of his dream, and, if the wizard's word proved true, come home with game such as none other of his tribe had ever got before in a single day.

And as he went, the young men in the village common-house were playing; the music of the mountains followed him, sad music of bamboo reeds and delicately concordant gongs, seeming

to give expression to that loneliness which is the soul of the virgin forest and which peoples it with spirits, for those poor mortals who cannot know that it is filled with God.

Kiem, at this time, had a baby son, called Pim — of that age when it is still quite fitting to roll about in the mud, among the pigs, since, blissfully, there are no clothes to soil. Pim does not enter into my story; but when I tell you that, ten years ago, I travelled through those forests with Pim, now an aged chieftain, as my guide, you will gather a clear notion of the period when this tale begins.

And where? Well, that is not quite so easy to explain without being geographical to an impertinent degree. Broadly, neither in China nor in India, but between the two; generically, Indo-China — the meeting-place of the brown and of the yellow races.

From the heart of China southward runs a chain of hills, hundreds of miles in length. On the eastern or lowland side is a long strip of tropical flats, between the mountains and the sea. And here lies the kingdom of Annam, where the King of Hué was, at the time I write about, wor-

shipping his ancestors with Eastern splendor and brutalizing his subjects, especially the Christians, with Far Eastern ferocity.

If the sea closed in the kingdom on the one hand, the mountains did so no less sternly on the other. For to the very edge of the highlands one wild tribe pressed upon another in the virgin forests, shouldering each other closely, and presenting to the plains so compact and so hostile a front that armed invasion was impossible.

It seems that these Moys (or savages) of the mountains are an Indian race, pushed eastward in prehistoric times and here making a last stand for life, on the utmost edge of the woodlands, against the yellow race, whose ever-growing millions break like waves against the rocks below.

The King of Hué has a plan, however, at the moment when our tale opens. For his dominions can no longer hold the teeming population, and he will have his people spread into the hills, where, moreover, there is priceless timber to exploit. Armed invasion is out of the question, but peaceful penetration will succeed. These Moys (or savages) — or let us call them "primitives," for I hesitate to dub my good friend Pim a "savage"

— these mountain tribes have many needs that the woods cannot supply, such as beads and tin, and, still more essential, salt. In exchange they can furnish, along with wax and ivory, the minor products of the forest. Trade, or barter, will thus offer a better chance than war of getting a foothold in the highlands. But the country is unhealthy, and the Annamese are loth to go. So the King takes convicts from his prisons, gives them royal charters to trade across the frontier, and sends them to open up the way.

And meanwhile, throughout Annam, Christianity is proscribed; hundreds of churches are thrown down; thousands of Christians are sent to torture and to death; the Missioners (as many as have not yet been slain) minister as best they can from their hiding-places on the rivers. But the Faith is unshaken, and the Christian villages, drilled in the discipline of ancient Chinese rule, are kept steady by the voice and example of their head-men and their Catechists — and the usually abject soul of the yellow race is carried sky-high on the flood of heroism to which the persecution gives rise.

The Bishop in this story is one of the glories

of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, Blessed Stephen Cuénot; his helpers are Missioners of the same company and Annamese priests of his training, men hardened from boyhood in the atmosphere of bloody persecution. I had wished to use the names by which they were known to their people, in order that the recurrence of unfamiliar sounds might keep us constantly reminded of one of the essential disabilities of missionary life, namely that the missioner is, and always actually feels himself to be, a stranger in a strange land, condemned forever to a hampering artificiality of tongue; yet he must make himself, as far as possible, a native. But I have been advised that readers get confused.

And now, let us return to Kiem, the Ba-Hnar chieftain, brown of skin and free as air, whom we left expectantly hunting in the mountain fastnesses, heedless of what was going forward in the nether country, and aware only that the yellow plainsmen were the enemies of his race.

He had met with no luck in the chase and had turned homeward, more troubled than ever about his dream. A witch had overtaken him, and, bidding him "Be quick! Be quick!", had van-

ished into the tiger-haunted thickets. Now his own wizard stood before him, chanting: "O Kiem the brave! O Kiem the happy! O Kiem the Sentinel of the Ba-Hnar people! The spirit-world is troubled and the Iang are frenzied with alarm. Strange portents have I witnessed in the woodlands, much scurrying and chattering of ghosts. There is a war between the Iang (the Spirits) and Ba-Iang (the Father Spirit). And thou art in the midst; for to thy hut has come today the first of Ba-Iang's men—and it is the soul of him that has troubled the woods since moon-rise. Get thee home and defend the Familiars of thy house."

In the village he found great commotion. A string of yellow men had just arrived; they were squatting around the common-house, to which no one had dared admit them until Kiem's return. Each had two baskets hung from either end of a bamboo pole, except their leader, who was busy parleying for admittance.

Now this was not the first time that a merchant from Annam had passed that way. Indeed this very man had stayed in the village once before, and, in exchange for half a dozen loads

of salt, had bought a young slave, who, before he died of ill-usage, had served the purpose of teaching his master the Ba-Hnar tongue. It was therefore not so much the sight of the Annamese that caused excitement (though it was far, indeed, from being common) but the evident commotion which their arrival had produced in the spirit-world; for by this time everybody was aware that something abnormal was afoot.

Kiem, however, saw nothing to be gained by refusing hospitality to the merchant and his train; they were at his mercy anyway, and he might as well see their wares; what ailed the spirits would no doubt appear in the course of conversation with the strangers. So they were admitted to the common-house.

But it was evening before any revelation was forthcoming. The bartering was over, and all concerned had eaten rice; they were squatting round the jars of millet wine on the loose bamboo flooring of the common-house, and the merchant was dilating on the splendors of the court at Hué and on the glory of the King.

"We Ba-Hnars," observed Kiem, "care little about kings."

The merchant slowly took his pipe out of his mouth and looked the chief between the eyes. A pause of palpable solemnity made, as it were, a sounding-board for his next speech.

"But when a king is big enough to look across the rugged mountains and through the pathless forests and to perceive that thou, Bok Kiem, art chieftain of thy people, that king is worthy of thy consideration. And when he sends thee gifts and asks thee in return to be a friend to the merchants of his nation who come hither, thou puttest but a seal upon thy freedom in striking a bargain that will both enrich thee and enhance thy reputation."

"Kiem is honored in his village and in the huts of his allies because his arm is strong and his heart is stout; he is tall of stature and glib of tongue — and he devoureth not his friends. The Iang, the Spirits, are with him — and thy king will add nothing to his credit."

The chief delivered this reply with absolute simplicity and the air of one who was stating facts of common knowledge. The conversation had now clearly reached a point where it deserved the close attention of all present, and the villagers,

chuckling their approval, kept their pipes poised, as they squatted round their hero, waiting for his further comment.

The Annamese showed none of the embarrassment he felt. He had brought a letter from the King of Annam, recognizing Kiem as chief of all the Moys and appointing him as royal agent throughout the tribe, but he had been careful not to broach the subject until he had officially partaken of the symbols of friendship and hospitality usual in the Moy country — namely, a chicken's leg and liver and a measure of millet wine; it was, indeed, largely on the influence of the latter that he had counted to put Kiem in the right temper for his proposal. But prospects now were far from bright; yet he was determined to succeed, knowing as he did that failure might easily mean the withdrawal of his own charter and his return to the horrors of a prison in the capital.

"Dô," he called at length, and his chief servant came swiftly to his side. This Dô was tall, for an Annamese; he was a perpetual wonder to his master on account of his willingness and his intelligence; the merchant had taken him, at the boy's own request, while still at headquarters on

the frontiers of Annam; he had placed him, at the outset, in charge of a flock of pigs, and then, within a very few months, surprised at never having occasion to chastise him for any misdemeanor, had watched him closely, appreciated him at his true value, and raised him to the first place in the company of servants chosen to set out on the present trip.

Dô, then, was requested to unpack the King's diploma and to unroll it. His master took it and showed it to the Moy, holding it with such ostentation of respect that Kiem, though he had no notion what the long roll might be, was filled at once with superstitious dread. This was, no doubt, what was perturbing all the spirits of the forest.

"Here," said the merchant, "is my King's offer. If his presents and my voice did not convince thee, I was to give thee this. It is the King who speaks in it."

"I hear no voice but thine," said Kiem, "and yet thou sayest that the King speaks; the *labaar* is mute."

This gave the Annamese his clue and he knew the day was won.

"The King speaks only to his subjects, Bok Kiem; keep this *labaar* in the casket with the *domong* (the fetishes) of thy household, and it will speak words of peace and good trading to all the Annamese who may chance hither and to whom thou shalt exhibit it unrolled." And with that he turned to Dô with instructions for the redistribution of his remaining merchandise among the carriers.

Kiem was left with the long scroll in his hands. The very notions of reading and writing were altogether outside of his experience; his one idea, derived from the warnings of the wizard, was that now he held a fetish of some higher power than the familiar spirits whose stones hung in a little casket on his wall. And he feared that if he flouted it he would be made to suffer. Silently he rose and carried the scroll with awe to his own hut; he was resolved to await developments and not run any risks — for the Iang do not forgive. Meanwhile the Annamese supposed he had accepted to be the King's agent among the Moys, for they knew nothing of his inner thoughts.

The merchant, when he woke next morning, was cheerful beyond his habit. During his few

weeks in the forests, as he came down from the North, he had done a business all the more thriving on account of the fortunate coincidence that his servants and carriers died of fever one by one proportionately about as fast as a man's load was sold; so that he had neither to feed any useless mouths nor to abandon any valuable goods.

And now he had established a definite foothold among the Moys, and was sure of some substantial mark of recognition from the King when next he should go north to Hué. He and all his party were not natives of the capital, but of that part of the lowlands which lay right opposite Kiem's country. Indeed they had barely two days to go before they would cross the frontier and get back to headquarters in Annam.

They started off in single file, without a word; but their pace was perceptibly quicker than its wont. On the second afternoon they crossed the plateau of An-Ke and emerged from the forest, on the mountain crest. A halt was called, and, at a single glance, they swept the plains below; yes, the green fields were still in place, with the river wriggling in their midst; the villages were still easily recognized by the bamboo clumps that

encircled them; familiar landmarks, ruins of prehistoric Indian temples and the like, still stood as witnesses to the fact that the valley was the same as when they had gone thence three months ago — and provided there be no change, the Oriental is content. The briefest lull ensued as the scene opened up before them, and then, just as when boys come out of school, there was a burst of voices and of laughter, the pent-up longing of many days.

But Dô was silent. His eye had sought one single spot of the horizon and it had seen a wreath of smoke curling up to heaven over the place he loved.

Chapter II

A BISHOP WHO BELIEVED.

"God bless you, my dear boy," said the Bishop, and he greeted the Deacon Dô with all the more exuberance for that his heart was full of many sorrows. The Deacon had first saluted him with the prostration required by Oriental etiquette, but now came the turn of love, a love made tender by the very heroism of the service that had proved it. And, for all these two spoke Latin, lest the walls should understand, they spoke with the intimacy of great souls melted together in the crucible of sacrifice for Another.

"It has taken me some days to find your Lordship," said the Deacon. "From An-Ke I saw the smoke of your burning village, and I prayed with all my heart that you might be safe. Praised be the Lord that our Annamese, with all their faults, still know both how to keep the faith and how to safeguard those who preach it. Changed as I am with my disguise and the marks

of my long journey, I had all the trouble in the world to find the palace" — his eyes twinkled and he waved his hand, as if exhibiting the marble halls of the Vatican itself. On the mud floor lay the Bishop's trunk, open but not unpacked; through the latticed walls came a whistling wind that shook the soot off the strips of thatch dependent from the untidy roof; through the open door could be seen a sampan moored in the river close by, and in the sampan two Annamese, apparently asleep.

"Indeed; 'the sparrow has found herself a house,'" smiled the Bishop; "but it is the second part I want to hear about, 'and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young.' You know that when I ordained you Deacon and sent you on your travels six months ago, it was not only because I felt it my duty to extend our work from Annam to the Moy country for the sake of the souls of the mountain savages, but also because I was in hopes that it might be possible to reorganize in the forests across the frontier our native Seminary broken up by the persecution. So I am doubly anxious to hear the results of your long trip."

"One thing seems to be certain, my Lord; namely, that of the innumerable tribes which occupy the hill-country north and south of us, the very best, as far as reputation goes, is the Ba-Hnar tribe, which lives almost immediately opposite to us, inland. They are less warlike than the Sedang, more moral than the Jarai, and less violent in their fetishism than any of their neighbors. I have learned a little of their language and noted all I could of their customs. Moreover, I have studied the routes that lead into their territory."

"The An-Ke route is the best, they tell me," said the Bishop.

"The best for merchants that have only this world's goods to offer, my Lord. But there are two good reasons why a more northerly route is preferable for us. First of all, it is so wild a region that no Annamese are used to going that way, and the tigers and elephants are better company for us than my fellow-countrymen just now! And then, on the An-Ke route lies the village of one Kiem, a chieftain whom the King of Hué has flattered by making him his agent. This man would be sure to give us up, regardless" he

laughed outright "of international law, if we fell into his hands."

The Bishop pondered awhile, in prayer. "Dô," he said at last, "you have deserved the confidence I placed in you. Indeed, you have deserved the chance to suffer more for our Blessed Lord. Are you tired of the cross of this apostolate?"

"My Father," said the Deacon, and his voice rang true, "I am tired of my sins, but how should I be tired of repairing them? And how could I so soon forget the lessons you have taught me all these years? *Calix meus inebrians quam praeclarus est!*"

"Then I will speak to you more openly," said the Bishop, his eyes downcast as if in shame. "The Lord does not abandon even sinners whom he places to rule his flock; He guides them and consoles them. I have the certainty, my Dô, that there will one day be men even of the Ba-Hnars who will offer the eternal sacrifice. The Lord has shown me a Ba-Hnar Priest; but I saw him, as it were, through a forest of crosses strewn with my dead and wounded Missioners. Are you afraid?"

Before the Deacon had time to answer, the

Bishop, who sat (on the floor, of course) facing the door, rose swiftly to his feet. Without a word, but with a few quick gestures, he put Dô in charge of the house, seized a lamp-shade hat and walked down to where the watchers in the sampan (two of his Seminarians) were signalling. As unobtrusively as might be he took the place of one of them, being only careful to lie a little lower in the boat. The sentinel, thus released, went to investigate the cause of their alarm. A party of coolies had landed a little further down the river, and were coming up the bank; it was growing dark and their forms were not distinct. As the sentinel went leisurely in their direction, they fell into single file and hastened their step unwittingly — whereat the sentinel stood, grinned widely, and saluted them with "*Laudetur Jesus Christus.*" The tension that had come over the party was instantly relaxed; no useless words were spoken, however; only, the sentinel led them straight to the Bishop's hut, took the latter's place on the sampan and told him that the Fathers had arrived.

In the half-light it took the Bishop several moments to pick out, from the five travellers, the two

white priests. In the first place, they were no longer white, having dyed their skin before setting foot in the land of promise; and secondly, they were the least clad of the party, owing to a circumstance that the Bishop knew nothing of, namely that they had been relieved of all their property, even to their clothes, by pirates off the coast. One of these priests was a man of some years' experience, whom the Bishop had called for the express purpose of opening the Ba-Hnar Mission; the other was a youth, separated from his Seminary days only by a year of severe buffeting round half the oceans of the world.

Seldom before or since were rice and extract of salt fish eaten in such joyful company. These lion-hearted men were at the opening of a campaign in which they knew that much blood was to be shed, most probably their own to start with. But their thoughts were neither of themselves nor of their distant homes; filling the background of their mind were Christ and souls, and in the foreground were their joy at being together and their plans for the immediate future. Occasionally they would remind each other to keep their hilarity within such bounds that it might not attract

attention from outside, but the warning acted only as a stimulant, as it does in school. Even the Bishop, with all his heavy cares, held his head between his hands and cried with laughter.

It was not indeed that any of their fun would make the reader even smile; but then the reader is not just safely landed from a perilous journey, just starting on a new, heroic enterprise, and meanwhile, relaxing his taut nerves in the company of his fellow-giants.

"Dô came back only today from the mountains," said the Bishop at last. "But he came back richer than he went"—and he pointed to a heavy bundle of brass sapecks that lay beside his trunk; they were the salary of the merchant's servant—"not like you gentlemen, who come naked to your Bishop," he added.

"Your Lordship is at variance with our theological teachers in Paris" replied the younger Priest severely. "They impressed upon us that any form of trade, *negocium*, was 'against the Canons' and 'contrary to the Missionary Spirit'! . . . But how can a greenhorn like myself keep straight when he sees his very Bishop filling his pockets with the spoils of an unholy commerce

among the Moys. I shall take the first train home."

"And I," continued the elder, "I protest that the Bishop should scorn our nakedness, when we did but distribute our possessions to the poor. We only imitated the holy Bishop of old who dispossessed himself even of his church vestments for the poor, and we saw, for instance, the purple cassock sent to your Lordship by the Carmel in Aix draped poetically about the strutting form of a Chinese pirate. Does your Lordship love the gentlemen of China?"

"My original destination," said the Bishop, "was for China, and I actually began work there, but circumstances compelled me to come over to Annam. In truth, I buried my first love in China; so . . ."

"What did she die of?" someone promptly asked.

When the laugh subsided, the Bishop, "in exchange for the bad name you have just given me," gave each of the Missioners a Ba-Hnar name. The younger was called "Short" and the elder "Long." Perhaps the adviser who has induced me to replace the Ba-Hnar monosyllables by

names he can remember would like me to translate these "Mutt" and "Jeff"—but I have not the courage.

It was thought unwise to delay the expedition a single day, in spite of the fatigue of all concerned. They could rest a little in the mountains, where there was less danger of being caught and handed over to the Annamese authorities and death. A boat was sent ahead up the river, with some young men who were to buy a hod-basket for each traveller and the necessary contents thereof and to meet them in the middle of the second following night on the river-bank where the path to the hills began.

The Bishop spent the night in prayer and, in the early dawn, he wrote instructions for the foundation of the new Mission.

After a Mass on the memory of which the Missioners fed their souls for many months, after the "last civilized meal we shall see in a long while" (and it was rice and extract of salt fish again, at that), after affectionate farewells and blessings, Father Long, Father Short, the Deacon Dô and five young men, mostly orphans of the Bishop's household or prospective Seminari-

ans, crowded into a sampan and started up the river.

Progress was slow by day, long hours being spent in solitary stretches of the river, waiting for the safety of darkness. The journey, however, proved uneventful up to the point where, on the second night, they reached the *rendez-vous*.

Each member of the expedition tied a basket on his back, took a staff in his right hand and a rosary in his left, and, after a short prayer, they began the long ascent.

It was the first march towards an assault on a hitherto untroubled stronghold of the Devil, and a counter-move of the enemy was not long delayed. Hardly had the party climbed the first buttress of the mountains when the warning cry of a wild elephant sounded on the path ahead. Instantly the cry was taken up to right and left, and there was a frightful trampling of heavy feet.

Almost surrounded as they were, the travellers had barely time to run for the shelter of some rocks. The elephant that had first given the alarm charged after them so quickly that he overtook the boy who was leading the column and would have mangled him but for Fr. Short, who

stood and waved his lamp-shade hat a little further down the path. The elephant, attracted, came after him, received the hat which was promptly thrown at him, ripped it into shreds, and bore off into the forest at the heels of the remainder of the herd whose retreat he had been covering by his heroic onslaught.

The boy however, had a rib crushed in; there was no choice but to place him on the shoulders of the strongest of his comrades and send him back to the boat, which was likely to be still waiting, as the rowers had no reason now to court the darkness. It was indeed a blessing that the accident had happened thus early in the trip.

The first village of the Moys was reached without any more mishaps; but it was not a typical village and I shall not describe it here. It was the settlement of one Ba-Ham, a freelance among the savages, who, being a robber, was somewhat of an outcaste from the Ba-Hnar tribe. But he was strong and wilful, and could subsist alone. He received the party with unfeigned delight, emptied their baskets and helped himself, as he was wont to do. The Missioners protested. Now it was the first time any one had ventured to pro-

test against the exactions of Ba-Ham, and that gentleman was not pleased. Finally it occurred to him that these Annamese were evidently not afraid of him, and consequently he grew suddenly afraid of them. He restored their scanty property to the baskets, put in a goodly bill for his few days' hospitality, found them guides, and sent them on to Kon-Phar (Kon meaning "village") two days inland.

Here they were able to rest awhile; indeed they soon began to fear lest they could go no further, for the Pharites were not disposed to guide these unknown travellers westward without an invitation from the tribe — and no invitation was forthcoming.

Chapter III

A VISION AND A VISIT.

At Kon Phar the Missioners had leisure to read and reread the instructions of their Bishop. They waxed more and more enthusiastic for the effort that lay before them, especially when Dô shared with them the confidential encouragements of the Bishop, which added much light to the written word.

"You are embarking on an enterprise that will cost blood, but that will earn glory. The Lord will bless it; so trust in Him even in the most desperate moments; offer your trials to hasten the final consummation.

"1. Go into the heart of the Ba-Hnar tribe; send me no message till you have settled there. Then, if God permits, I shall send helpers to you, and give each of you his duties.

"2. There is a river that runs out of the Ba-Hnar mountains towards the Me-Kong in Laotia. Before leaving the Ba-Hnars, this river waters a fertile plain; there you will choose a site for the headquarters of the Mission and for

a Seminary where I may send our Annamese out of the range of persecution. But write to me from the first place where you build a shelter of your own.

" 3. On your journey west keep clear of the savage Kiem, who is an agent of the King of Hué and who would be sure to hand you over to the Annamese. In your first letter to me give me precise information regarding the character of the villages you stop in.

" Remember, you are fighting a winning battle, like our Lord on Calvary. Do not be afraid to use the arms He sharpened nor to share the wounds He bore.

" The day will come when He will call the children of that race even to His Royal Priesthood."

This letter was so clear and straight and satisfying that it seemed to fill the emptiness as the days and weeks wore on. The pioneers rested a little from their travels, and, in spite of their eagerness to move, waited without impatience for the Lord's own time. For still the people of Kon-Phar refused to take the risk of leading them deeper into the woods.

They were living in what is known in every Ba-Hnar village as the *common-house.*

A word about these villages of the Moys.

Each family has its own hut, lifted on stakes, some five feet from the ground; the floor is of split bamboos laid loosely enough to enable the inhabitants (so the explanation runs) to spit through the floor instead of on it; the walls are of the same material, matted somewhat tighter; and the roof is thatched with reeds. If the family is large the hut may reach as much as a hundred feet in length; it will then be divided by bamboo partitions on either side of a central corridor, which leads away, to right and left, from a central hall, wherein the patriarch dwells, within earshot of all that happens under his roof (and under his floor for that matter, since his pigs and dogs and fowl and sacrificial bullocks disport themselves beneath his feet). On entering such a hut one is instantly reminded of the Ark, and in the rainy season the illusion is so vivid that one has to make a constant effort to retain the reality of things.

Before each entrance to such a house is a square balcony, where, of a morning, the women may be seen pounding and husking the rice — the first duty of the day. The only access to the house is by these balconies (called *pra*); and the only ac-

cess to the balconies is by a pole in which dents are cut by way of steps, and which is laid at a sharp angle on the edge of the *pra*.

To the windward, safe from possible fires, one may always find a miniature reproduction of the village, a collection of what seem to be spacious kennels, in the same style as the huts. These are in reality the granaries where the rice is stored, with safe protection against nature in every form, but none whatever against man, for the Ba-Hnar does not steal.

Neither does the Ba-Hnar plough. His bullocks are intended for sacrifice (and, thereafter, food) — but to make them work would infuriate the Iang. And so, choosing the woody flank of a precipitous hill, he goes out with his hatchet, attacks the trees some three feet from the ground, hews with incredible speed, burns the most priceless hard-woods with utter disregard, spreads the ashes and sows his rice in little holes. The crop comes up without further effort on his part, except that he will usually build a high platform in the midst of his field, where he will sleep when the grain is yellowing, to be at hand if bird or beast should threaten damage.

His harvesting consists in lopping off the ears. He has no use for straw and no knowledge of the plough — so he takes the essential grain and lets the seasons destroy the rest. And consequently, after a couple of years, he has to make his field elsewhere, often transporting his village at the same time.

In the midst of the village is the *common-house;* there may be several, if several villages have blended into one. It towers above the other huts and is really a wonderful piece of work. The roof sweeps down at a sharp angle and spreads out to cover a thousand square feet of floor; a clever use of the triangle gives the inner bamboo scaffolding a big margin of safety against even the tropical storms that devastate the forests. On each of the four sides is a spacious *pra,* and, beneath, a series of stout stakes carries the entire edifice with ease even when crowded to the doors.

This common-house has many purposes. It is the council-chamber of the village; it is the inn for friendly travellers; it is the dwelling of all unmarried boys. Each family in the village owns one of the bamboo posts that are erected down the centre of the hall; to each post is tied a jar or

two of millet wine in which a couple of suction-tubes are dipped. In the floor are fixed strong wooden frames filled with sand, on which the fires burn; several boys go into partnership to keep a fire lighted; they hang their bows and arrows, their beads and trophies, in the corner nearest their particular hearth; they lie around it and smoke, in their lazy hours, and sleep beside it, on rattan mats, at night.

It was in such a house that our apostolic party had its lodging week after week, in Phar. There was not a moment in which they were not subjected to closest scrutiny, and it took all their faith and courage to endure it, as, humanly speaking, they were in an *impasse,* securely and definitely blocked.

Their provisions were nearly done and the situation threatened to become tragic. Again the Bishop's letter was brought out, and again its crystal clearness was taken as the voice of Providence. Come what might, they would obey.

"It's a great life," concluded Fr. Short.

"If you don't weaken," came the reply. And at the moment when that word of wisdom was launched upon its long career, the calculations of

men were suddenly reversed; for the Lord awoke and began work.

There was a stir among the men upon the *pra,* a greater stir among the young men inside the common-house, and a tall and graceful savage entered, the object of unmistakable deference on every hand.

Dô nearly sent his neighbour sprawling.

"Glory be to God," he said; "it is Kiem!"

Not one of the party spoke, but each was secretly probing the depths of his heart to feel how it really stood towards martyrdom now that the chance had come, not as a dream but as a certainty.

Chapter IV

THE LABAAR AND THE LIE.

Kiem had come north, three days from home, looking for a run-away slave of his household. And the Missioners, who had taken the rugged road precisely in order to keep out of this man's way, were now forced to put the management and credit of their enterprises in other Hands. Again and again in this story will the Providence of God come mockingly to the rescue of poor human wits.

Kiem, being a popular man, had been lavishly treated at the wine jars along his way. He had found his slave, and was in the best of tempers.

He had another good reason to be pleased to meet the Annamese: in the hod-basket upon his back lay the parchment of the King of Hué which he had not yet tried on any Annamese, to see if it would really speak to them. And, while he pretended to despise the thing, he was really not a little proud of the distinction, besides being held by superstitious awe of the *labaar* itself — for

reading was an unknown art beyond the frontier, although some few Ba-Hnars, and Kiem himself indeed, had, by contact with the merchants, learned to *speak* quite a little Annamese.

He looked the party over, and soliloquized in a series of rapid questions which he gave no one any time to answer.

"Where do you come from? What under heaven brings you by this unfrequented path? Where are you going? What can I do for you?"

As he spoke, the white faces of the Missioners (clear by this time of their dye and adorned with heavier beards than ever Kiem had seen before) dawned upon his consciousness. He took it for granted that these men were fugitives from justice in Annam, and it pleased him, in his then mood, to show his independence by protecting them.

"Never have I seen faces as white as yours. It hurts me to think of personages like yourselves living in this place. What can have brought you here? Is life so bitter in the plains?" Then, noticing the anxiety they could not hide: "You have nothing to fear. I am your friend, and not a Ba-Hnar will hurt you against my counsel.

Even the Annamese would seek for you in vain if they wished you harm."

Dô was the first to answer. He had no fear of being recognized, and spoke out boldly, with Oriental promptitude of diplomacy.

"The fame of Kiem has reached us," he said. "There is no man in all these mountains whom the King of Hué so trusts as thee."

Kiem's thoughts leaped instantly to his diploma, and he drew it from his basket.

"I have a *labaar* from that king of yours," he said. "I have been told that the *labaar* will speak to the Annamese. Do you hear its voice?"

Dô stretched out his hand for the parchment, unrolled it and looked it over.

"The *labaar* says that Bok-Kiem is as a king among his people. That the Annamese should trust him; that he will be their friend and helper in their enterprises."

Kiem was afraid. He had only half believed in this new talisman, and now it was proved to be a living voice, which he could not hear, though others heard it. He took it back, and placed it, not without trepidation, in his basket.

Dô pressed his advantage home. "We too," he

said, "carry a *labaar*" — and he picked up the Bishop's letter that still lay open on the floor. "It is not a *labaar* of the King, but of one greater than the King, of one who speaks in the name of Ba-Iang, the Father Spirit. And it is because it tells us to go and teach His will to the Ba-Hnars and to expose the Lie which dwells amongst them that we have come into this place. It may be that the King would punish us for leaving his dominions even on that errand, but we must do the bidding of this *labaar*, for Ba-Iang is greater than the King. Will Bok-Kiem be with us?"

"The Iang, the Spirits, have hitherto befriended me," said Kiem unhesitatingly," and I will not oppose your *labaar*. What would you have me do?"

"The *labaar* tells us that, deep in the Ba-Hnar country, flows a river that waters a broad expanse of plains. If Kiem will lead us thither he will do us the greatest favour in his power."

"There is a river called the Bla, watering a plain such as you speak of. But it is beyond the world's end for me. I can lead you westward one day hence and ask my ally, Bliou, to conduct you further. And meanwhile, in order that you

may have no fear, let us become brothers in the blood."

This was a momentous proposition, the full force of which the Missioners failed utterly to grasp, being ignorant of the Moy customs in this matter. However, they had no choice but to let things take their course.

Kiem inquired the names of all the travellers.

The white faces of the Missioners terrified him more than all the tigers of his highlands. He did not dare to speak to them and was delighted that Dô had been their mouthpiece. We shall see later how this same terror, renewed in every breast, proved a frequent obstacle to them in their work.

"These two great Grand-Fathers," he said, introducing the word Bok (the super-honorific of his own language) into the Annamese that he was speaking, "these two great Boks I shall look up to as a younger son; but with thee, Dô, I shall take the oath of brotherhood."

This proposal calls for explanation, and the reader must not take it amiss if we here make an excursion into the Moy mentality with regard to these alliances, in order to make it clear why, in all the years that followed, never once did Kiem

betray his trust, and why, even at great personal risk and loss, he stood for the Mission against the world — so that even today, when he is dead and buried fifty years, his son, the aged Pim (even though he has seen the outer world and learned of its dishonesty, and though he is still a pagan, like his father), will be at pains to escort and help the successors of his father's friends.

Along with brief information on these Moy alliances, we shall, by way of psychological glossary, give an outline of the Animism on which these people feed their souls, and thus convey a clue to the religious and social customs into the midst of which these Missioners walked blindfold in those early days.*

* An exhaustive study of these tribes, from the pen of Father KEMLIN, late Pro-Vicar of the Ba-Hnar Mission, has been published by the *Bulletin de L'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient.* It is the main source of the information here conveyed.

Chapter V

FRIENDSHIP, BROTHERHOOD AND BLOOD.

Kiem, on recapturing his slave, had cut a lock of the boy's black hair and put it safely in his own belt. The chief soul of the slave, the one which usually stands upright on a man's forehead, must now feel uncomfortable without the familiar lock; the chances are that it is flying about, in the form of a grasshopper or of a wasp, looking for what it misses; having found it the soul will settle on it; anyway, the slave will follow Kiem, because if he runs away, Kiem will bury the hair, the soul will take it for granted that the slave is dead, and will not come home—hence a fit of sudden sickness for the slave.

The soul wanders, therefore, outside the body. If it meets a Iang, or Spirit, one of whose taboos it has broken or whom it has not placated, it is taken prisoner; a sickness follows, which will be unto death if the Iang can be neither appeased nor frightened. Generally, however, the witches

can tell you how to get back the soul. It is only if the Iang is very powerful or if the soul has married and settled in the spirit-world that you will die a sudden death on the one hand, or decline to an early grave on the other.

If your soul is getting used to being absent from your body it is apt to become visible, at night, to your friends, whom it terrifies by visits even in distant villages. Thus has many a Moy been notified of coming death.

But the normal soul is more home-loving, and, even after death, comes looking for the body. The Ba-Hnars are in constant dread of ghosts, and so numerous are the preternatural manifestations, averred by trusted witnesses, that finally the Missioners have become convinced of a perpetual teasing of these poor fetishists by the Devil, who is their master.

When your soul is safe at home it stands on your forehead and guides you all day long. A man has not "a sure foot" or "a splendid eye," but "a first rate soul" to guide his steps and arrows.

And moreover, every soul has a *mana* of its own, an influence on other souls. If Kiem was powerful, it was due to the superior radiation of

his soul; if the white men were terrifying, it was their *mana* that made them so.

The same is true of the souls of trees and animals and even stones — and it is a dangerous business to experiment in *manas*, for you may get the worst of it in unexpected quarters.

A hunter will be lucky only if his soul is in harmony with the soul of his bow; a Moy will reap wealth of rice if his spirit is at one with the spirit of his field. Once this harmony is reached, success is certain and can only be prevented by some malefice by means of which an outsider has neutralized the *mana* of one or other.

During sleep the soul is always absent. If your memory works back over past events you are simply not following its travels. But, if you dream of things not yet accomplished, then, on awakening, you should examine the matter very carefully; for your soul has been travelling in the spirit world, where events are always rehearsed by the spirits before being enacted on our stage; so that, if you have a lucky day, you praise your soul for its clever work of the night before, since it learned and taught you to avoid all the obstacles to the day's success.

A dream which is not a mere trick of memory is as real as any concrete action to a Moy. He will tell you, without any qualification, "I did so-and-so; I went to such-and-such a place"; and if you have reason to think he did not do it in his waking hours, the only question you can ask without offence is "was it 'on this side' or 'on that side'?" and he will tell you.

But a dream that presages good for him he will not tell, lest some stain on your soul give offense to the listening spirit; neither will he tell dreams of future evil lest the spirits should think he is saying what he wants; but, on waking, he will lie down and whisper them to the threshold, which everybody steps on and which is detestable to the spirit world.

What makes the fortune of the witches is the fact that there are two soul-worlds; one for the ghosts of the dead and one for the spirits of living nature—and there is an entirely different set of values for each world. For instance, if I dream that the spirits are eating up a pumpkin in the dark, provided I make sure they are the spirits of the dead, then I may count on eating, myself, a bullock with my friends; if they are only the

spirits of the living, they would have to be eating at least a deer, and that by daylight, to justify the same assurance — for the world of the dead is in all things the opposite of ours, whereas the world of nature-spirits is parallel to ours. Hence, innumerable cases which alone the practised witch is able to unravel.

Now in these dreams the Ba-Hnar often sees himself accosted by some spirit who could be particularly useful to him, the spirit of the woods, or of the waters, or of war, or even the great Grand-Father of Thunder himself. The Iang asks the dreamer for a present — he is hungry for pig's meat, maybe. And the interview (of which there are many traditional forms, which follow the bent of each man's nature) is carried on with wealth of detail which would be hardly possible for minds like ours, distracted by wider experience and diverted to many interests. These dreams are only regarded as surely genuine when, shortly before or after, the dreamer finds upon his path a prehistoric silex hatchet or some curious stone to serve him as a fetish of the friendly spirit.

Then comes the sacrifice and the alliance with

the spirit. The dreamer and his family are bound by solemn ritual to a series of taboos, which have been learned either in the dream itself, or from tradition, or from the witches who see the spirit world. And the observance of the taboos laid on him by all the spirit-contracts in which he has a share is all the religion of the Moy.

That religion is animistic, since it is based on the belief that every visible object has its corresponding spirit; it is fetishistic, since every allied spirit is represented in the home by some curious-looking stone, kept in a basket hanging from the roof; and it is essentially individual, since it rests on a personal contract with one or other among myriads of spirits. Its only general rules are the taboos enacted by the spirits with which all men come in contact, such as the spirit of the rice fields, or of the village, or of rain.

In the above remark, culled from the careful studies of successive Missioners, we are very far indeed from having emptied out the contents of the Ba-Hnar mind in regard to the invisible. Indeed, we had no further wish than to make clear the fact that for him the spirit-world is quite as real and much more crowded than our own; it is

also more powerful, and one must walk warily to avoid its snares.

But it is not enough to manage one's invisible concerns successfully; one must also take account of living men. To this end a suitable series of alliances will contribute not a little. Wherever you are likely to travel you must have an ally who will be bound to give you hospitality and to act as middleman in your exchanges. Whomever you have reason to fear you should consecrate as your friend and brother, with ritual oaths in plenty. With enemies that you cannot conquer you should contract the bond of blood and make a lasting peace, even at the price of many bullocks to be sacrificed and eaten in common joy.

The consequences of these three alliances (of friendship, brotherhood and blood) go deep into the heart of the social system of the savages. Had the Missioners but known it, they would have been delighted, not apprehensive, when Kiem offered the alliance of brotherhood to Dô; at the same time, the more or less idolatrous practices involved would, if understood, have precluded its acceptance. As it was, however, things proceeded with good faith and something of fear in the

hearts of all concerned. Even Dô, who knew a little of the language, could not understand the imprecations used; their meaning, and that of the ritual itself, did not get analyzed until a generation later.

As a preliminary to the ceremony Kiem bought a jar of millet wine, tied it to a stake in the midst of the common-house, cut four rattan reeds some three feet long and plunged them into the jar, inviting Dô and the two Fathers (these not without misgivings) to drink with him. Then he gave a chicken's leg to each of the two Priests, and to Dô (as the protagonist of next day's scene) its liver. He then allowed them to retire, and went, himself, to prepare the coming celebration.

Chapter VI

THE UNBREAKABLE SEAL.

The day was ushered in by the sound of gongs. Each village owns, at the least, one set, made in Annam but brought to tune by the savages themselves. The young men divide the instrument between them, appoint a drummer or two to accompany the music on the tam-tam, and, with clever variations, produce a melody that sounds singularly sweet as it comes moaning through the forest in the neighbourhood of a Moy village.

The entire male population thereupon assembled in the common-house, squatting around the fires, while Kiem and Dô sat face to face on either side of a jar of wine.

A pig was slaughtered, and a chicken; and the blood of each, collected in a little bowl, was placed between the friends. Into the bowl was scraped the surface of the teeth of the wildest animals of the forest; dust of various "trees of death" was added to the mixture; a red-hot bracelet was

plunged into the blood, to symbolize the fevers that would be consequent on faithlessness.

Dô was compelled to drink a little of this unusual breakfast; the remainder was poured upon his chin, so that it ran down onto his breast; and upon his neck, so that it trickled down his back.

Meanwhile the music became fast and furious; the squatting savages rose to their feet with threatening gestures, displaying, so that the spirits could make no mistake, their wish for vengeance on him who should break the troth.

Kiem gave solemn utterance to his position: "I take the oath in the drinking of this blood. If I speak with perfidy or threatening words, if I give countenance to an enemy, let me shrivel up and die and fall to dust; and" (supplying what Dô could not say in the barbaric tongue) "if he is faithless, let him likewise die."

The audience improved, with gruesome details, on the threats of vengeance. A reed was brought, with some straw tied to one end, and was set upright in the jar of wine, as an image of the unfaithful. Dust of all things unlucky was sprinkled on the wine.

The spirits were invited to drink first, their

share being, naturally, the soul of the beverage alone. "Let us keep faith," said Kiem, "ourselves and our children and their children. We shall be welcome in each other's house, we shall help each other in trade and field and war. If one of us speaks evil of the other let him shrivel up and die and return to dust. Let an arrow pierce him; let a bamboo cut him or a tree fall upon his head; let a tiger tear him or an elephant crush him or a wild-boar rip him; let his own sword wound him; let him die a leper — and his children and his wife." Dust from the village graves and the bark of deadly trees were meanwhile rained upon the two.

The assembled company then did justice to the pig and to much wine, the feast being prolonged till it was time to start for the village of Kiem's ally, Bliou.

A chicken's leg had been kept carefully for the last act. It was now brought forth and broken across the knee of Dô. "See how I break this bone," said Kiem. "If thou speakest perfidy may thy legs be likewise broken."

Dô was presented with the sacrificial bowl, with a pickaxe and a mat. "If thou speakest perfidy,

take this pickaxe to dig thy grave and this mat and bowl unto thy burial."

As the party left the village, the young men ran out before them and buried in the path all the symbols of death that were available and when Dô trod them underfoot, they shouted, as if he had actually betrayed. "Let cancer eat thee, leprosy devour thee; die a miserable death, thou and all of thine."

It will easily be imagined with what relief the Missioners found themselves under way again. The great trees and the green undergrowth of the forest offered untold relief from the din of the hideous morning. Kiem led the way with rapid strides and his good face, no longer distorted with the artificial passions just displayed, occasionally turned reassuringly to see that all was well.

"Now," he said at last, "we shall set about the bidding of your *labaar*."

"Bok Kiem" the Deacon Dô replied, "thou hast done a good deed this day."

And the Missioners walked dreamingly, their thoughts deep in the mysterious ways of Providence.

Chapter VII

A GATHERING OF GIANTS.

Bliou was at home when the party reached his settlement on the following afternoon. But all his devotion to Kiem could not solve the difficulties he perceived in the plan of sending the Missioners forward into the Ba-Hnar country. They would inevitably get involved in endless troubles if they came, unexpected, among the inland savages, who had never seen an Annamese, let alone the face of a white man. They would be fined for breaking rules they knew not of; they would be powerless to defend themselves, unarmed even with the weapon of all mankind, the tongue.

Accordingly he took them out into the forest, being unable to force even his own village to shelter them, and helped them to build a hut. Here they were to stay, while he negotiated their further progress.

After a few weeks, when it became clear that

they could not move forward yet awhile, they sent the Bishop word by two of their Annamese, in obedience to his letter, that they had built a hut and awaited further orders.

In the meanwhile, two new subjects had come to the Bishop's side and were waiting for the word to follow Bok Short and Bok Long into the mountains. One was Bok Thin, a man of 45, worn with the many trials of a long career among the persecutions of Annam. He was a man whose basic trait was kindness, whose one ambition was to die a martyr, and whose character was a perfect blend of active zeal and passive courage. He was destined, in the Bishop's mind, to found and head the projected Seminary in the Ba-Hnar country. The other was Bok Wise whose later notes are the backbone of this story;* a native of the Pyrenees, he was born and bred a mountaineer, with a constitution fit, if any ever was, for the buffets of a trying climate and the roughest life on earth.

These two, then, started out, with half a dozen Annamese, to reinforce the party in the forest. Over pathless crags they made their way until the

* "Les Sauvages Ba-Hnar," by P. Dourisboure.

elder of the two sank down exhausted. They travelled barefoot, in native fashion. Not only were their feet cut deep by stone and thorn (and their hands and faces too, indeed, as they dragged themselves through the dense thickets) but they were tortured by a species of ant so vicious that it can never be torn from the skin without leaving its head behind; and by the leeches; not the kind that lives in stagnant pools, but the microscopic specimen that hops down from the tree-leaves onto the passerby, gets in under his clothes and sucks his blood, leaving a gaping sore.

Less than half the journey was accomplished when the elder Missioner fell exhausted, and it was several days before they could proceed. Hardly had they started when the sight of an Annamese coming in their direction reminded them that even yet they were not beyond the reach of those who might make capital of their capture. What was their relief and joy when the apparition turned out to be Dô, the Deacon, sent to find out the cause of their delay.

On the following day, they entered, unawares, a war-zone of the Moys. "Glory be to God! I am wounded!" Dô's exclamation was so sharp

and sudden that the whole party started, with tingling ears. The savages who were guiding the expedition were at his side in an instant, and, laying him on the ground, attempted to extract the dart that had entered the sole of the Deacon's foot; but it had broken in the wound and could not be removed. These darts are planted in great numbers at every approach to a village that fears invasion. The sharp end, pointed upwards, is so fine that the eye can seldom catch it among the leaves and stubble of the forest. There are darts intended to reach the stomach, others for the knees and legs, and, above all, myriads for the feet of the advancing foe.

Now the fact that a peaceful traveller had been wounded laid the village open to a heavy fine, or to reprisals. So the Ba-Hnar guides, leaving the Annamese to help the Deacon, went forward to notify the village that had placed these primeval mines. Great was the consternation of the villagers. They came out, men, women and children, and surrounded the Missioners, protesting that the dart had not been meant for them. The sight of the white faces put them in an agony of terror; might not this be a party from the spirit-

world and, if so, where would their vengeance end?

They made a stretcher for the Deacon and carried him into their common-house, where he remained for several days, the object of the tenderest care; for the splinter could not be extracted, and the slightest jolt, when he was moved, caused intolerable pain. But he kept a smiling face — out of charity for the terrified Moys — and, meanwhile, insisted on the Missioners continuing their journey "home." It was New Year's Day, and he spoke enthusiastically of this cross as the pledge of God's blessing on their effort in the coming year: "The Lord Jesus has put this seal upon His work — it is the sowing of the seed; things had gone too smoothly altogether."

The smoothness, however, was only relative. When, at last, the travellers reached their comrades, they found them very far from luxury — —but farther still from sadness.

Bok Wise cleared, at one bound, the brook that ran beside the hut, and Bok Short came out to meet him, Bok Short, whom he had known for years as a student, but whom now, after a few

short months, he could not recognize. "I bet my boots," said the latter, looking down at his naked feet, "that a month from today you wont be jumping brooks — But, are we downhearted?"

"No," replied Bok Wise decisively. To a "layman" the greeting might have seemed a little bit discouraging; but a professional of the apostolic life is goaded, like a lion, by his wounds; and the thought of them beforehand is as oil to the fire within his soul.

"I," came a voice from inside the cabin, "am too great a man to come and meet my guests. They must come to me." It was Bok Long, whose leg was festering from a recent wound, and who lay on the bare floor, delighted with his fate. In due course Bok Thin came limping up, and the quartet spent the first evening in utter joy. *"Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum!"*

Chapter VIII

FEVER AND FAITH.

Bliou had chosen this particular place on account of the vicinity of the running brook; but he could scarcely have selected a less healthy spot. It was closed in by hills on every side, and the damp air had no chance of renewal. The inevitable result was fever.

Even before the coming of the second party, every member of the first had been down with one form or another of intermittent fever; with some it was already chronic. One poor boy, after a week of raving, had lost his reason. He would tear off his clothes, run out with them into the forest and hang them at the very top of the highest trees. Once, after two days, he was found in a state of half-starvation, under a distant elm.

It may be thought that, under such cheerful circumstances, there was nothing to be done but break up camp and return into Annam. But the Missioners were too well aware of their vocation

THE DEACON DÔ

THE HUT OF FEVER AND FAITH

THE DWELLING OF KIEM

and its conditions to think of flight at the first touch of pain; besides they had their orders, clear and full of hope, and they were all the more certain that the Bishop knew his mind when Dô told them the story of one of his earlier experiences: the Bishop had sent him to encourage a Catechist who was to be tortured in a mandarin's court, and when the lad had returned with the intelligence that he could not gain admission without running a big risk of being seized himself, he had been dealt with so severely (on the principle that the word *impossible* is unapostolic) that he did not advise anyone else to show the white feather to His Lordship.

A couple of weeks after his arrival, Bok Wise made the acquaintance of the sickness. He felt, at first, an unpleasant warmth, but it did not occur to him to complain. He went, instead, to bathe in the running brook. No sooner was he there than his blood went cold; he had barely time to get back into the hut before he began quaking with terrific violence; he lay down beside the fire in the centre of the hut — the others watching him, helpless, for there were no remedies to be had, even in Annam, in those days. As the fever

grew, his body shook, bent and unbent like a bow, till the hut itself rattled at every shock. He was conscious, but could not control his actions; he heard a deep voice speaking as it were inside his head, but knew not of what it spoke; his members seemed scattered in every corner of the hut, and each of them was fighting a fever of its own; he felt himself watching this chaos from afar off, perfectly satisfied that it would last forever. All night long, the excitement of his brain flowed and ebbed, and the racking of the body, if it ceased awhile, did so but to gather strength. Then, with the dawn, came the reaction — an utter prostration in which earth and heaven fell into a common darkness, and only the faint throbbing of the well-trained will served as an anchor in the sea of desolation. No wonder that, in weaker minds, this fever led to madness.

Bok Wise, with his iron constitution, was a foe worthy of the fever's supreme effort, and in a short month he was no longer a man, but a rag. The others had more constant but less violent attacks.

Whoever had an hour's respite would go out looking for some roots or tender plants, in par-

ticular the shoots of the young bamboo, and would come home, cook his collection in an earthen pot, and serve it with a bowl of rice. One day a fish was caught—not quite the length of a civilized sardine; it was brought home in triumph, cooked in water, and cut in four, and it changed the rice into a meal that day. But there were other days when no one ate, for all were sick together and no one was equal to the task of cooking.

"We had a portable altar, and could say Mass, such of us as could stand," says Bok Wise in his notes upon this period. "But often, after beginning Mass, we would be seized with fever and would have to cease. Yet, I say it to the glory of the tender loving-kindness of our Lord, never once did any of us have to leave the altar after the most Blessed Sacrament was upon it. And I assure you that our trials were our deepest joy, for the Lord Jesus filled them with ineffable sweetness."

Kiem came to see them after a month or so, and he was so much distressed at their condition that, on reaching home, he sent them a pig and a chicken and as much of a bullock's carcass as a man could carry.

Dô had come back, meanwhile; and on the very day when his splinter, finding its way between the bones, came out safely of its own accord, Bok Short, in his turn, trod upon a dart which went clean through his foot.

During all this time, Bliou had vainly tried to open a road to the westward. It was only after all possible avenues had been closed and human hope was gone that Providence again stepped in and cleared the way.

There came one day from the village of Ko-Xam, which lay a day west of the settlement, the most upright man of the whole Moy country, — one of those souls that play into the hands of the Redeemer — the good and excellent Hmur.

What he came for I do not know, God knoweth who led his steps. He could not take the Grandfathers into his village, he said, without the consent of his fellows, but he saw no reason why they should not come on a short excursion, if they chose, in company with Bliou. A day was appointed on the spot.

Bok Wise and Bok Short and the Deacon Dô started out in the wake of Bliou. Whenever they neared a village they plunged deep into the woods,

lest the terror they were certain to inspire should cause a panic that might be fatal.

All went safely till the last village, which they skirted too closely, in order to save time, as night was coming on. This village was in high festival. A war dance, to the sound of gongs, was proceeding around a buffalo tied to a flower-decked stake; the buffalo, wounded and in fury, was snorting to all the echoes, and the village, mostly drunk, was responding nobly. Suddenly, strange figures were seen hastening across the brow of the neighboring hill. Indescribable confusion followed, as the men flew to arms and the women to shelter . . . and lo, when they were assembled ready to repel the enemy, they saw the latter's tail vanishing in the west and there was nothing left but to vent their fury on the bullock at the stake.

It was dark when Ko-Xam was reached. The palisade was shut. Hmur did not come at the first summons, but repaired to the common-house to consult the village. On principle the village made a fuss — all villages, town councils, municipalities and the like are constituted for that sole purpose — and, judging from human nature elsewhere, Hmur must have had the loudest voice in

that assembly, since eventually he was instructed to let the strangers in.

The following day was spent in being stared at and in exhibiting such *débris* of the outer world as still clung to the visitors. A river flowed below the village, and great was their joy when they heard it was called the Bla; this was the river of the *labaar*. Unfortunately, even Dô's small supply of words was almost useless, as the dialect was substantially different from that used near the frontiers of Annam; so that neither could he inquire for the plains the river watered nor could he get a canoe for exploration. One thing was certain, namely that as far as the eye could reach around Ko-Xam there was hill after hill and valley after valley, without end.

Bok Wise all but lost his life in making sure of the above fact. Mountaineer as he was, he volunteered to climb the nearest peak, to reconnoitre. He tore his way (and his hands and feet and clothes) through all the brambles of creation, to the top — where he arrived in dripping perspiration, and utterly exhausted. There stood, on the very crest, a tree, which gave him hope of a free view, and so, gathering his remaining

ounce of strength, he climbed to the topmost bough, recognized that the view was blocked by further hills — and fainted.

He awoke eventually and clung desperately to the tree-top while he regained his senses. But who had held him there in safety while he could not help himself? Even the thought of Providence could not save him from the dizziness consequent on realising danger. He climbed down with the greatest caution and stood trembling on the hilltop. Thence to his companions he made incredibly quick way, so anxious was he to share with them the touch of the hand of God.

The Ko-Xamites were so pleased with their visitors, or Hmur and Bliou were so eloquent, that they consented to allow the Missioners to come and live with them. They were to come back on the seventh from that day.

During the intervening week, the Devil played a clever game. A good-for-nothing savage, who had "hung around" the former settlement, had finally "found a job," which consisted in an occasional excursion in search of the necessary supply of rice, and on the small profits of this service he lived in laziness. Now he saw the preparations

going ahead for breaking up the camp and he was worried. Finally he decided that in such a crisis a little exertion was no sin, and he set out, one morning, for Ko-Xam. He stopped for a drink of wine in every common-house (I have hitherto avoided saying *public house*, but the temptation is getting strong), and, with solicitude, warned the villages against these Annamese and their strange powers, especially over women, whom they seduced by magic. In Ko-Xam itself he sowed the cockle in such plenty that every seed of good feeling was safely choked, except in the faithful breast of Hmur. The latter argued that Bliou had seen as much of the Annamese as the informer, that Bliou was the better man, and that therefore Bliou should be trusted and the strangers admitted to the village.

But a Lie is always dear to the heart of man and the Lie prevailed, for a while.

When Dô, who was sent with two Annamese to build a hut in Ko-Xam, arrived in the common-house of that village, he met nothing but frowns. On his way thither, every human being, from as far off as the strangers could be seen, fled into the forest; and every village palisade was closed.

Never a word did Hmur breathe of the rumors that were abroad; indeed, it was not until several years later that the story came to light. He did the best he could for his protégés, and argued loudly in the common-house that they should be admitted. But the Lie was too strong, and, finally, he was obliged to compromise by leading them half a mile down the river and helping them to build outside the village site.

A few days later, Bok Wise and Bok Short arrived in their new quarters. Bok Thin, too weak for such a journey, stayed behind with Bok Long of the festered leg. But the call of the *labaar*, the Bishop's orders, proved irresistible. First Bok Thin set out, fainted by the way and was carried, nearly dead, to the new hut; and a few days later Bok Long, gathering his leg into portable shape and cutting crutches from a friendly tree, started out at daybreak and made the entire trip, by a superhuman effort, in a single day.

Chapter IX

THROUGH FIRE AND WATER.

During the year that followed, life had, for each member of the apostolic band, simply the value of the contents of his own heart; for objectively, it was nothing at all. Not a savage, for many months, would come within speaking distance of any Christian — except Hmur, the ever faithful, and his sister Hmon, the widow.

Hmur undertook to buy the necessary rice, but he could not get it locally and was forced to make long journeys into neighbouring tribes. Of an evening he would come and sit in the little hut, and sometimes even stay all night. On these occasions, as he afterwards admitted, there was one thing that made him shudder. The Annamese would, as the custom is, say their night prayers aloud, or rather chant them; the melody is interrupted by long stretches of rectotone, the beat of the monotonous voices offering a singular resemblance to the even, staccato touch of a per-

fect typist. Hmur, the while, sat trembling in his corner, speculating on the nature of the Iang that would reply to this novel mode of invocation, and it was only when the prayer was ended without the intervention of any preternatural occurrence, that he breathed again.

But the Lie was busy and all but secured the victory in those days. When the right season came, the little colony decided to plant a rice-field of its own. The trees and undergrowth were hewn, with hard toil, from the hillside, and left to dry. And finally the glade was set on fire at four corners at once. In five minutes, Bok Wise and Bok Short, who were supervising operations from the centre, were taken unawares and surrounded by the flames. They knelt one moment in common prayer to the Queen of Apostles, and then, leaping through the fire, plunged headlong into the Bla. But, if their life was saved, their situation was still critical. It had never occurred to them that the tall green trees around their glade would let the fire pass; but soon they saw the flames leaping above the tree-tops and swooping down, under the wind, in the direction of Ko-Xam. It happened that the villagers were all at

home occupied at some common work; experienced woodmen as they were, they rushed out and sent a counter fire to meet the advancing wall, and thus, when the two flames met, both died for lack of fuel. Had the savages been out working in their distant fields nothing could have saved their village; and as it was, the Lie had all too easy a game to make them believe that the Annamese had plotted their destruction.

The Devil was palpably at the bottom of this business, for passions awoke which were altogether outside the habits of the Moys, who, even in their wars, aim to capture rather than to kill. But now the Ko-Xamites deliberately planned the murder of the Missioners.

One afternoon Hmur came with an invitation to the Fathers to go up to the common-house to drink wine. So unexpected an opening was received with joy and, two of them being free of fever, these accepted. There was a lull as they came in, but noisy conversations soon broke out again as the sucking-reeds were plied with assiduity and the jars ran low. But Hmur alone gave hospitality to the strangers.

When they had tasted of his wine, Hmur rose,

towering above the squatting figures of his fellows; he was known to be strong and he was known to be absolutely fearless; and besides, his own wife was a witch — so that he was certain of a hearing.

"Some of you men," he said, in a voice that trembled not a whit, "look askance upon my affection for these strangers; you are angry that I have brought them here today. Whom have they injured? Let him get up and speak. Or must you whisper only in the secret ear? Lo I, Hmur, will show you that I am a friend unto these men." He snatched a brand from the nearest hearth, and put it deep into his mouth; then he tossed it to one Poi, the leader of the conspiracy. "Bite upon this," he taunted, "and swear me hatred, as I swear to thee."

As usual with the Ba-Hnar, the threat was uttered absolutely, leaving the condition unexpressed, namely "if you injure my friends." Poi sat cowed beneath the wrath of Hmur, and the plot went up in smoke. The Missioners did not understand a word of what was said, and only learned, years later, from Hmur himself, the peril he had averted.

Since Bok Wise and Bok Short had nearly perished in the flames, Bok Long and Bok Thin could do no less that tempt the waters. Bok Long was treating his swollen leg according to the anticipated principles of Kneip and Bok Thin was following the same prescription for the hideous scales of itch that covered him from head to foot.

One day they took a log-canoe and launched out upon the Bla. They could row with all the grace of a tame rhinoceros and swim with all the buoyancy of a well-bred stone. In three minutes they were upon the rocks a quarter of a mile downstream, and in three seconds more they had parted company with the log-canoe and were, or should have been, both drowned among the rapids. In point of fact, Bok Long came out on the Ko-Xam bank of the river and Bok Thin on the far side, each unknown to the other. The forest grew luxuriantly to the very edge of the Bla, and it took Bok Long some hours to get home through the creepers and the thorns. He was still telling of the drowning of Bok Thin when a piteous voice was heard from the opposite bank announcing his own untimely death and asking for as-

sistance. And so another evening was spent in joyful comment on the ways of Providence.

Shortly after, public opinion growing more tolerant, Hmur was able to invite his friends to live under his roof. They accepted eagerly this chance of settling in the village.

It became possible for the three younger men to go up each evening to the common-house and listen to the conversation of the Moys after the day's work. This was the first chance they had had of learning a little of the language. Each would take a notebook and get down a word as soon as he thought he had its meaning; the following morning would be spent comparing notes.

There is nothing in the world more difficult than to learn a book-less language from a primeval people. Outside the range of concrete objects, it is impossible to get an explanation. Suppose you catch a word that seems to mean "to know," and suppose that word is "bao," you ask a savage "what does 'bao' mean?" and he answers like an echo, "bao"; you bid him say the same thing in another way, but he assures you it means "bao"; and if you insist, he turns to his fellows appealingly and says; "I cannot get the

Grand-Father to believe that 'bao' means 'bao'; the Grand-Father won't believe a word I say!" And he sulks forthwith. And you have to wait, and watch contexts, and gather examples, until you can decide whether "bao" means *to know,* or *to think,* or *to believe.* While they were three, this work was relatively simple, however; but later, when they were dispersed among the dialects it was intolerably weary.

Less than ten miles downstream began the plain spoken of in the *labaar.* But the Lie was busy, and even Hmur had not dared to speak, so frightful had been the threats of the plainsmen against whoever should lead the strangers down. But at last curiosity, for once turning traitor to the devil, brought the Missioners a visitor from the plains; and as, by that time, they had begun to live down their evil reputation, they were invited to return the visit, the more so as the plainsmen had found them willing to buy rice and other necessaries at a good price.

Thus at last was the way laid open to the heart of the Ba-Hnar country. Several trips were made in quick succession, and at last a hut was bought in the village of Ro-Hai, situated on the

banks of the River Bla where it runs, wide and smiling, into the trackless forest of the plain.

Messengers were sent to the Bishop in Annam —and his return orders were to establish the centre of the Mission at Ro-Hai, whence Bok Thin should report on the chances of a Seminary for Annamese; and, keeping Ko-Xam in the east, to found two new stations northwest and southwest in the plains, making a triangle whose apices were each at a day's journey from Ro-Hai.

Chapter X

MIDNIGHT AND AFTER.

This arrangement did not persevere. Bok Long and Bok Thin were so constantly sick with fever and dysentery that the Bishop understood they were not young enough ever to get acclimatized in the mountains. Besides, it soon became evident that any Seminarians who might be sent up from Annam would spend more time in looking after their diseases than in studying their Latin. So Bok Wise and Bok Short were left to carry on the work alone. The Deacon went down to Annam for ordination, and the only new Missioner who was sent up languished awhile and was removed.

It was on New Year's Day that Bok Short went to install Bok Wise in his new post. The latter was to live, not in a hut of his own, but under the roof of Lam, "the most intelligent savage I have ever met." Lam's intelligence, however, relieved the situation very little. Bok Wise

had a corner by one of the family hearths — and there were more than fifty other people under the same roof, crying babies and shouting children, loud-voiced women and drinking men. No sooner had Bok Short left him than Bok Wise, as it was New Year's Day, received his portion of the Cross, not in the body as Dô had met it a year before, but in the more intimate spirit.

As when the lights go out in the middle of a play and we are dropped back, unwilling, into reality, so did all the high lights of his apostolate leave him in the lurch, and a black discouragement broke upon him, so sudden and so utter that he was overthrown. The flood of his individuality surged back and carried away all the conquests of long training and sharp suffering at one assault.

He was lonely to desperation; the faces of his friends at home and of his comrades in the land of exile crowded around him, but came not near; only the masks of the black and laughing savages seemed to grin and taunt him on the hither side of the great gulf fixed.

And here he was to be, cut off from the use of his own tongue, or any tongue indeed, and from

intercourse other than with these forest savages, whose manners and whose outlook and whose country and whose food all filled him with an overwhelming loathing as they came one by one to mind.

And then his indignation turned upon himself. He was a fool to have come so far and given up so much for the sake of an impossible ideal; the absolute sterility of his efforts was due, as he might have known beforehand, to his sins; and not the least of these, he felt, was that he had left his mother to decline in sorrow to the grave when he should have been the angel of her ebbing days. The triumph of the Lord could not be built after all, he grew convinced, on the foundation of that crime.

He could not pray; but the fact that he tried and tried again was proof that, in the general stampede, his will had held its ground. This, however, afforded him no consolation at the time.

He was on the point of starting out to find a solitary refuge in the forest, when he noticed that the hut was crowding fast, and that there seemed to be a central point of interest to which all faces turned, preoccupied. A baby was dying,

the child of a neighbor's slave, brought in for the advice of Lam. Bok Wise, quick as a flash, baptized the infant, nobody offering the least objection — and a moment later the white soul was gone.

This, then, was the fruit of all his travail. Now did the Lord come back, as the Lord's way is, with gifts. Now did salvation dawn on the Ba-Hnar country, and that by the hand of him who had been tempted to despair.

He went out as he intended — but it was no longer to ask sympathy of the trees, rather to sing to them with chaotic joy the goodness of their God.

Lam had two sons (the Ba-Lams, Bok Wise denominated them on the Bar-Jona principle); one was fifteen and large, the other thirteen and small; while the elder was called Nam (a name utterly lacking in originality), the younger had shown signs of rare precocity, long before the arrival of the Missioners, in securing the name of Pat. *Pat*, if you please, and Bok Wise lost half the merit of his long apostolate by baptizing him, eventually, *Joseph!*

This boy was interested in Bok Wise. He

would stand beside him and look down upon him as he said his Office or his Rosary and wonder whom Bok Wise was speaking to so long. Later, when the priest built his own hut, the boy would go up several times a day and sit with him. As he grew freer with the dialect, Bok Wise was able to disclose the truths of Christianity to Pat, whose quick mind supplied what was lacking in the utterance of his master.

But faith did not come until he had learned to pray; then suddenly the thought of man's destiny got hold of him, and he began begging for the grace of baptism.

Meanwhile Bok Short was busy in Ko-Xam. He too, worked with the thin end of the wedge. Hmur had no children. But his widowed sister had an only child, named Tot. Matters went, with Tot, very much as they had gone with Pat; and as soon as Tot believed, he beleaguered the soul of Hmur.

The very goodness of this man was, at first, an obstacle to his conversion. He was devoted to the Spirits, and no sacrifice was too great for him in their service. Still, he was willing to pray, as Bok Short bade him, to Ba-Iang, the

Father-Spirit, and, in due course, he overcame the Lie. He had, indeed, two merits that predisposed him for the gift of Faith: first, he had been loyal to the ambassadors of Christ; and secondly, his heart was pure — for, as he told Bok Short when the latter was instructing him on the sixth commandment, "even as a young man, if I met a woman in the forest, I would go by with downcast eyes, for fear of evil thoughts."

When Pat and Tot and Hmur were all ready for their baptism, Bok Wise took Pat over to Ko-Xam, so that all might be baptized together. On the way the Lie made a supreme effort to deter the child. A tigress and her cub crossed the path in front of Bok Wise and Pat — a circumstance which, as any Moy will tell you, was portentous of great evil; incidentally the two might easily have been ripped to pieces — but the Lord was with them, and the tiger, shaking its head, moved on majestically, with the cub in tow.

A few more steps and another phenomenon appeared, less dangerous for the body but more subtly terrifying to the soul of Pat. A bronze figure, life-size, of an Indian goddess, the vestige of a former occupation of these mountains,

squatted severely under a monstrous tree, protected by a ditch. Bok Wise was much relieved when the child, deliberately overcoming his sudden fear, took up a stone and flung it lightly at the idol's head, "with the compliments of Ba-Iang." The crudeness of the act was relieved by the realism of the faith which prompted it.

Just as they reached Ko-Xam, Hmur was bringing to Bok Short his basket of do-mong, the fetishes of his household. This was the supreme test. The stones were emptied onto the floor; Pat laid hands on the largest two, and, striking them together, shivered the more brittle of the two.

"Poor old thing!" he cried. "Hmur," he added, "here is a splendid flint; if you have no further use for this half of your household god, I can make it work a little, to repair its years of idleness."

Hmur was a solemn person and did not answer, but Tot took up the business. "No," he said, "there are lots of flints in the forest; let us give these fire-stones a bath and see if they will drink up the river." And forthwith the party adjourned to the running Bla, where Hmur him-

self, with heroic deliberation, flung the do-mong, one after another, to their place of rest.

"Do-Mong!" said Hmur, loud enough for his pagan relatives to hear him, "you have seen the last of goats and pigs and buffaloes; it will be a clever devil that can get another sacrifice out of Hmur!" And his stern face broke into a smile. But his wife, who was a witch, and his sister, Hmon, stood afar off and wept.

Then came the ceremony. Dô had just returned, a priest; and, in reward for his early service which had opened the country for the *labaar,* he was bidden strike this first blow at the heart of the vanquished Lie.

The letter of the Ritual suffered some shocks during the christening, but the spirit was triumphant.

Tot was asked if he "renounced the Devil." "Yes," he said, "the Fiend and all his fellow-fiends! I will have nothing more to do with them. And I shall fight them till they go out of the midst of my people."

Pat took the cue from Tot and said he would not rest till his father, too, was christened, and he gave the Devil (as Bok Short said afterwards)

"the divil's own time." But the dignity of the ceremonial of the Church Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic, could not tolerate these outbursts, which were instantly suppressed.

"Well," said Bok Short when all was over, "are we not repaid today for the trials of two years?"

"Two thousand years of fever would be nothing," said Bok Wise. "Glory be to God! glory be to God!"—and he too, wept.

PART II

RO-HAI, ON THE RIVER BLA

A TORRENT MEETING THE BLA

A PREFECT OF ANNAM

Chapter XI

HAND IN HIS HAND.

The forest saw much of Bok Wise and Bok Short in those days. The former especially, living as it were in public, in the hut of Lam, sought relief under the big trees from the rudeness of mankind. Or else, in order to get in touch with the neighboring villages and also to increase his chances of conversation with a view to learning the language faster, he would often accompany parties of the villagers on their errands to and fro. And then, once a month or so, he and Bok Short would exchange visits, for their mutual consolation.

Now, in these journeys, they should have perished a dozen times; the dangers of the forest should have swallowed them up. But from every peril they were kept safe, though pain was their daily bread. And they declared insistently that they owed their safety to the prayers and cloistered self-oblation of a Carmelite nun in Aix,

who had consecrated her life to the progress of the Ba-Hnar Mission. We shall see later how this tradition was continued in the following generation and we shall have occasion to record more closely this blending of the two deep forces, active and contemplative, which carry on God's work. Meanwhile, let us make the acquaintance of the forest, which, down to our own day, teaches the Ba-Hnar Missioners to carry the Cross of Christ.

Not that the woods are in themselves unfriendly — quite the reverse; but they have somewhat of the prerogatives of a big brother, who can both protect and torment, caress and tease, deter and tempt, and who can command, along with utter devotion, a little fear.

Bok Wise, leaving his hearth in the midst of the noisy house, would go out into the thicket. Instantly a sense of independence would come over him, the bonds of all conventions would be broken, the conventions of his own upbringing and the conventions of his adoptive people. Here were the solemn, aged trees that spoke contempt of transient rule and custom and taboo, and brought him back to laws eternal, immutable and

equal to his deepest cravings. He was soothed and, in quick progression, lifted out of himself to the Realities and brought back exulting to himself and to his share in them. Only when the skies were heavy and the woods were dark and silent did his loneliness assert itself and eat into his soul — and it might take a Rosary or two before he was at peace again.

Occasionally he would meet a savage digging roots or picking plants and berries. He would never fail to take advantage of the long experience of the Moys to learn what could be eaten, plant or animal, in famine time. In regard to the animal world he found the rule to be very simple: except two kinds of snakes and two varieties of insects, everything is eatable. Once he came upon a group of savages who had found a prize: a python had twined itself around a bullock and squeezed it clean in two, breaking skin and bones alike; then, with a mouth eight inches wide, it had contrived to swallow one of the halves without dividing it any further; and, after this admirable but inimitable feat, had dragged itself into a neighboring hole, intending to spend its entire vacation there. The other half of the bullock had

been nibbled by the jackals, and was the reverse of fresh. When Bok Wise came upon the scene the Moys were cooking for themselves a dainty meal of (saving your presence) the worms picked out of the carcass. When they had eaten (and Bok Wise with them, as often he had to do for sheer starvation, or so as not to give offense) they cut up the carcass aforesaid; then they went after the python, got it by the tail, dragged it, still sleeping, from its hole, cut it up, portioned both it and the undigested bullock, and carried all the booty home to be divided (as the Moy rule is) among the entire village.

Such details are in bad taste — but this story is of real life and its purpose is that the reader may sound the depths of heroism without which a Catholic Missioner is nothing — and what one endures in the flesh another can hear of without quailing.

The Moys are clever trappers. With fibre springs and bamboo lances they contrive to kill the largest game, even the tiger and the elephant. These traps are brought, by sentinel crosses, to the notice of the public, so that accidents are rare. When, on the edge of a tank, the traces of big

game are found to be reasonably constant, the tank will be enclosed with a hedge, in every break of which a trap is set. Bok Wise, one afternoon, walked through one of these breaks, went round the tank, watching the prints of tigers and boars, deer and buffaloes, pythons and the rest — and came back through another break. He was met by a breathless savage:

"Did you reach the water?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"Come and see." The savage led him to the break; with the end of a long stick he touched the fibre and let loose a dart that would have pierced a buffalo clean through. Bok Wise felt his blood run cold — and he spent the rest of the day thanking a watchful Providence for his life. The savage who had laid the traps was no less pleased to have escaped a lifelong persecution by the ghost of this extraordinary stranger.

A few days later, Bok Wise started out with a group of savages on a distant errand. As the custom is, the party listened most carefully for the singing of certain birds which play together in flocks of six or eight, each one jabbering a different note. According as they chirp to right or

left, in front or behind, high or low, the presage is good or bad; and not the deepest motive will carry a savage forward in opposition to these birds. On the present occasion, however, the portents were exceptionally good; by a rare chance, whenever the birds were heard, they were heard in the best possible position; so that the savages walked briskly and with light hearts.

It was evening when they reached their destination. The palisade was closed, and the villagers, calling from inside, said that they were taboo.

"But the birds have been with us all day long," answered the travellers.

"Very strange! But still we are taboo today and tomorrow and the next day. We cannot even give you rice outside."

This disconcerting news was but the prelude to a string of mysteries. The men went back, an hour's walk, upon their steps. It grew dark and began to drizzle — and the next village was, in turn, taboo.

There was no choice but to go back further. Late in the night they reached another palisade

and found a third taboo. And now it poured. They were starving and wet and cold. Their torches had gone out. Finally, by a streak of lightning, they discovered an old shed in a field, and they took shelter in the only corner that was dry. Bok Wise, drenched though he was, went off into a heavy sleep; he was awakened an hour later by the noise of the savages chasing away a tiger — and the rest of the night he did not sleep. Next morning, on their way home, they barely escaped being carried away by a treacherous torrent — and they reached their village at noon in a state that need not be described.

Bok Wise got dysentery after this affair. The nature of that sickness left him no choice but to go out and live in the solitude of the forest. When his thirst was no longer bearable, he dragged himself to the nearest stream; but his weakness was so great that he could not stoop to drink, lest he should lose his balance. As for food, he held the very thought of it in utter horror — and for five days he did not eat. The Moys saw that he was dying, and they were terrified. It never entered into their heads that they could help him; his soul was gone, and only a witch could

find it — but Bok Wise was stubborn in the matter of witches. So they were content to go out and tell him how sorry they were to see him without his soul, and to beg him, after death, not to come back and frighten them — for his ghost would be the most appalling one that ever scared the countryside. And Bok Wise, who could hardly breathe, had to listen to all this nonsense and forget himself.

But the Lord did not forget him. Just as he thought the end had come, as he was making a supreme act of resignation to die without the presence of a fellow-priest, Bok Short arrived, a week ahead of his usual visit. The sight of him was so intense a joy to Bok Wise that his "soul came back"; he took a heavy risk in eating a mess of rice concocted by his visitor (it was the sixth day since he had tasted food) — and forthwith recovered; recovered, indeed, so thoroughly that his fevers were much less frequent and less violent from that time on.

Nevertheless, once or twice, he was caught in the forest by his fever. There was one instance that he was fond of telling, because he felt he owed his life to our Lady of Good Counsel. He

had walked all morning and had come, at noon, to his destination — but the village was taboo; he knew that his attack was due at 3 o'clock (these fevers being mostly intermittent) and he thought he could reach a further village within that hour. At two it began to rain; the chill brought the fever on before its time; and Bok Wise could not take another step. He sat in the slush, and finally lay down, knowing that to be chilled by rain in the midst of fever meant inevitable death. Suddenly it occurred to him that he had not prayed. He turned to the Mother of Good Counsel, and, instantly, not only did the rain stop but he got back his strength and was able to walk on to the nearest village.

Bok Short was not exempt from his own share of adventure, and his debt to the far-off Carmel was no less great.

On one of the days when he was to visit Bok Wise, he awoke so early, that in his impatience, he could not wait for dawn, but started out, lightly clad and wholly unfed, hoping to make a quick trip and reach his friend by noon.

The tracks between the villages are far from easy to distinguish; they run in and out among

the bamboo brushwood, and a moment's inattention is enough to set a traveller astray, especially if the path happens not to have been used for a week or so. Bok Short came to a place where the forest had been freshly cut to make a field — and there he lost his way.

It was almost noon when he met a stream, by the edge of which he had eaten his rice on a former trip; but this time he had no rice, only the satisfaction of getting back his path — a very substantial satisfaction but a flimsy nourishment.

He rested awhile and went on, crossed a village and came, after an hour's walking, to a split in the trail. He went to the right, and it was only after a mile or more that he recognized his error. With false economy he elected to cut across in order to regain the left-hand path; the clear forest tempted him, only to mock him the more surely; he soon came face to face with an almost impenetrable thicket of tall grass growing among thorny shrubs. Gallantly he charged, regardless of the rents in his none too heavy garments; here and there he went down on hands and knees to make a passage.

Suddenly he gasped with fear, as he discovered

that the thicket was full of traps; only a special protection of Heaven could save him, and he prayed aloud as he worked his way forward inch by inch. A startled tiger rose and fled; great gaudy birds hung overhead, the swish of their wings recalling (most inopportunely) the hiss of flying arrows; and monkeys tittered in the taller trees.

At last he struggled through and found his path — and, as he set foot on it, down came the rain. An hour later he reached a second stream; it had swollen and was impassable; a fallen log, however, bridged it partly, and, hoping to jump the rest, Bok Short went forward. The log was rotten and it landed him in the torrent; he tried to wade across and was carried off his feet; indeed, but for a friendly branch, he would have been whirled down, in a moment, to the neighboring river. But the branch came from the wrong side, and he could not get across by it. As a last resort he tried jumping from stone to stone, with the result that he slipped, straining his ankle and gashing his leg — but got across.

Starving as he was, he nearly fainted with the pain; but he sat on the bank and let the

water massage his ankle for what seemed an endless age — and finally he was able to walk again.

His next trouble was with the leeches. These bloodsuckers are a torment to every traveller throughout the rainy season — but their persecution of a recent wound is indescribable. So thick and fast did they gather in the gash on the Missioner's leg that he soon gave up trying to extract them at every few steps — he walked on with desperation, for it was getting dark.

Soon he came to the last village before his destination. A woman stood on the balcony before her door, and Bok Short asked her for a handful of rice, which she refused.

Now nothing could have done Bok Short more good than this refusal. It braced him, for it put the day's and the night's adventures so much nearer to the heart of Christ, which was wounded by man more than by nature.

Thus near his journey's end, Bok Short contrived to lose his way again. He tried to climb a tree so as to guess the right direction; but he was too weak to lift himself above the ground. He stood, panting and exhausted, alone in the

solemn silence of the forest which seemed to hold its breath as night came down.

He was wet with perspiration and the cold wind came with its burden of sure fever. "My God, my God! if I had a little fire!" A great log lay to the right; on the sheltered side there might be some dead leaves; he picked up the driest he could find in the darkness, took out his flint and a small piece of tinder which was far from dry. To his astonishment the tinder caught and burned up quickly, so quickly that he had not time to put the leaves in contact before the flame was gone —and with the flame went hope.

His utter loneliness threw him back on God. He was famished, thirsty, wounded, cold, exhausted and alone. He had prayed to God for fire—and lo! he was perishing in the dark. But there was another spark deep down within his soul; the spark that had made a priest of him, the spark that had brought him half way round the world, the spark that had made a Carmelite of the little nun who prayed for him, and of himself a Missioner. It was this spark which the Lord was pleased, all of a sudden, to fan into a flame.

A wave of supernatural joy came sweeping

across his soul. "God of my life, Eternal Truth, Undying Love! Now dost Thou recognize me just a little for a Missioner of Thine? It is for love of Thee that I am here, and all my weariness is dearer far than home and country, honor, wealth and life. This is my all, Thy love and the vocation Thou hast given me."

And he sang aloud, sang the psalms of nature, bidding bird and beast and rain and thunder and trees and brambles bless the Lord, for the name of Him is Love. There, indeed, thus utterly alone, could a man pray deeply, truly, passionately, madly, in disregard of sterile rules and hampering conventions, till the deathless foundations of his being rocked with the possession of its Desire.

At last he laid him down beside the fallen tree —and slept.

With the light of dawn he woke, and the shortcomings of this vale of tears pressed themselves again on his attention. He found a broken pumpkin, half eaten by a monkey; and he ate it—rind and pulp and seeds—even to the edges which were spoilt by the monkey's teeth. But he could hardly walk; his every muscle had grown stiff, and his leg was deathly sore; soon, however, as

the blood went round, progress became less painful, and at last he came upon a lake where two savages were fishing. He called to them; and they, in sudden panic, fled; one of them stopped at last, however, and consented to guide the Missioner to his journey's end — and he arrived, a cheerful wreck, at his brother's hut. It was nine o'clock, on Passion Sunday morning.

Chapter XII

WHICH WAS WITCH.

Men who could meet their tribulations in so exalted a spirit were necessarily masters whose influence on their converts led the latter rapidly to astonishing heights of heroism. And, as personal sanctity has a radiation that cannot be gainsaid, progress was but the logical sequel of their courage.

At the time of Hmur's conversion, the best possible season was at hand for planting maize; but the taboos were against taking advantage of the weather, and nobody moved. But Hmur, at Bok Short's suggestion, started to plant; his friends, and they were many, came and wept upon his shoulder. "Life is short enough already," they asserted; "why curtail it by deliberate provocation of the Iang? We don't want to meddle in your affairs, but, this stranger will be the death of you. If you must die, don't say we did not warn you, and don't come back and torment us later on."

Shortly afterwards Hmur actually did fall sick — but he summoned all his energy to hide his illness and to overcome it, and Bok Short prayed with nothing short of violence. He was well again before the harvest, in time to meet his friends when they came begging for a little corn, their own having been planted too late to ripen.

"Well, gentlemen," said Hmur equivalently, "I don't want to meddle in your affairs, but as a friend I may as well let you know that this is a shady business; unless you want to join the Iang before your time, you had better have no share in these illicit gains" — but, mockingly, he was generous.

This incident made a deep impression and sowed the seeds of many future conversions in the neighborhood of Ko-Xam. But if any accident had befallen Hmur before the harvesting of his corn, all the hopes of the Mission would have been blasted in one day. Indeed, a nasty wound met with by Hmur on a subsequent occasion of the same kind, almost undid the good impression created by his first escape; but Bok Short stormed Heaven to such effect that the wound healed quickly and calamity was averted.

Meanwhile Bok Wise had got away from the house of Lam and had built a hut of his own in the forest. The little Pat, left unprotected in his father's house, was now subjected to much ridicule and harsh language by the other young people, whom he would not join in any kind of wrongdoing. He stood up to them fearlessly and (much to the delight of Lam, who, though still a pagan, cherished this boy with special love and rejoiced at the change that had come over his rebellious temper since his association with the Priest) usually came out, in word and deed, victorious.

Nevertheless, he soon grew weary of the struggle and went to live in Bok Wise's hut. Here he would bring other boys to play; they were timid at first, but soon grew fond of the Priest. Pat was a born leader; he kept his friends amused and busy, and enlightened them, incidentally, as to the Faith—and, before they knew it, they were learning the prayers and doctrine from Bok Wise himself.

It was not long before three of them asked for baptism; and a proof of their good dispositions was soon forthcoming. One day an attack was

expected on the village, and the women and children were sent away to safety. But those three boys came running to Bok Wise. "We can't go away with the others," they said, "because if we are attacked we must be where we can get baptism before we die." It proved, however, a false alarm.

The Annamese who had come with the Missioners from the plains had not, as a rule, much liking for the savages; none the less, they gave them good example. Bok Wise had only one of them with him at this time; a true-hearted and devoted servant. This boy fell suddenly sick of an unknown disease, and, in spite of Bok Wise's care and watching, entered his agony on the third night. Bok Wise, exhausted, had gone apart to take a little rest; suddenly he heard a heavy thumping, which brought him, in an instant, to the side of the patient, whom he found pounding his breast with a stone. The boy knew himself to be dying, and, fearing that his contrition was not perfect, he had called Pat and bidden him bring a stone, wherewith a last penance might be tried. The Father watched, thereafter; but, before dawn, the soul had fled.

Bok Short was, meanwhile, making good headway in Ko-Xam. Two or three of Hmur's close relatives, when they found that his contempt of all taboos left him "strong in the morning, sleeping sound at night," joined him in giving up the fetishes.

But the conversion which is worthy of most comment is that of Jieng, the wife of Hmur. The reader will remember that she was a witch. In order to show the mountains moved by grace in this instance, it will be well to make the reader aware, once for all, of the part played among the Moys by the *bo-jao*, the witches.

The profession is entered upon either after a dream, in which the subject, almost invariably a girl, is chosen by the Iang; or else it begins by manifestations of what we should call possession. The deformed and the insane are regarded as particularly suitable mediums, since, among primitives, any abnormality is the stamp of preternatural aptitude and associations.

The candidate comes, for initiation, to some adept of the black art, who, after going over in detail all the powers to be conferred, gives a lighted candle into the novice's hands, to symbol-

ize the inner vision. Then she lifts the eyelids of the elect and says: "I take the scales from thine eyes, that thou mayest see all hidden things."

Thenceforward, with the help of her Grou or familiar demon, the witch can see what is going on in both the spirit-worlds; she can thus foretell what is to happen among men.

In sickness she can say by what sacrifice a spirit is to be placated; she can discipline men's various souls and call them back when they grow restless; she can, by scraping the flesh with a little pickaxe, drive back an evil spirit from a vital organ to the extremities, and thence out of the body.

She has a trick for every circumstance, and, commanding the utter credulity of all, feathers her nest with the profits of her lies. A favorite treatment is the following, attempted only by the most powerful witches; in a broken cup or gourd the witch mixes wine and meat for the spirits; then she takes a red-hot pebble and drops it into the philtre. The jet of steam which rises from the cup must touch the wound or the part diseased — which, appearances notwithstanding, is cured at

once and need give no further anxiety whatever. The witch is then paid, and departs on further errands of like mercy.

The witches alone have power to decide the time for planting, harvesting, travelling, marrying, removing the village, going to war — in a word their counsels reign supreme. Sickness, death, and ruin are the penalties of unbelief.

On one occasion the devil put the Mission in dire danger through a witch's malice. A girl had come from a distant village to a wedding in Ko-Xam; on the return journey she was taken with some kind of fit, and died on reaching home. Obviously someone in Ko-Xam had *deng* her, an operation which consists in sending an invisible arrow with an invisible bow to make an invisible, but fatal, wound.

The relatives of the deceased came in high dudgeon to Ko-Xam; in the common-house everyone agreed with them that some Ko-Xamite must have *deng*, and that it only remained to find out, from the chief witch, who the culprit was.

These cases are very frequent, and the witches are prepared for them. The culprit is invariably

sold into slavery for life, so that it is not safe to accuse any important person; usually some poor widow or orphan is made the victim; but her looks are a consideration, as they will count with the slave-dealers who come, with caravans, from the western plains.

In this instance the *bo-jao* said the culprit was a young woman employed by Bok Short, a Christian girl who had never entertained a thought of evil against any one. This the witch publicly ascertained by the breaking of eggs — a ceremony conducted with much solemnity. The witch first gets a hint of the person suspected, then learns by heart the names of all the people dwelling under the same roof and those of some notable people of the village. Thus equipped, she comes to the great assembly, bearing half a dozen eggs. Here she goes through a frightful list of imprecations, interspersed with mystical formulae and hysterical contortions, till the audience is thoroughly worked up. Then she lays hold of an egg, places it between thumb and finger of the right hand, and lifts it high in air. The representative of the deceased then begins a novel cross-examination.

"In what village is the culprit? Is he in Kon-

Toum, or Kon-Phar, or Kon-Do-Xam? etc." At every name the *bo-jao* makes apparently stupendous efforts to break the egg. But only when the village of the accused is named does the egg burst over the audience.

The same procedure is followed to find the house of the culprit, then the sex, and finally the name. And never has it entered into the head of any Moy to suspect the possibility of fraud.

It will thus be easily seen in what danger Bok Short was placed. The crime having been proven in this manner, the girl had not a single defender; everyone was convinced that she had committed murder; the relatives of the deceased claimed possession of the murderer's person, and the Ko-Xamites were loud in their approval; yet Bok Short could not hand her over; and if he refused, war would be declared on Ko-Xam, or else he and all his friends would be cast out into the woods.

Bok Short put the matter into the hands of our Lady of Good Counsel, and sent the following answer: "If Yon is really guilty of this murder, she deserves your wrath and shall be handed over. But in so important a matter I must be

sure. Come, three days hence, with your *bo-jao,* and if the latter breaks the eggs to my satisfaction, I shall agree with her decision."

During those three days Bok Short practised breaking eggs; but, not knowing the treatment by which they were made brittle, he found it none too easy. Still, he did break them, though without *éclat.*

On the day appointed, a great crowd assembled outside the palisade of Ko-Xam; some sixty of the relatives of the deceased were present, armed and angry.

"Where," said Bok Short, "is the witch who says that Yon has done this deed? Let her come forward."

A little old hag, black as a coal and with eyes that welled forth sin, declared herself the accuser.

"Ho, ho!" said Bok Short, glaring down upon her, "so thou art the diviner that seest hidden things? Come close — and thou shalt look again."

The wretched creature was terrified and dared not move. But all the savages encouraged her, and finally she came into the centre of the ring. The witch brought out a bundle of rags, un-

wrapped them one by one, and, from the midst of the unsightly filth, extracted the sacred eggs. Then followed the necessary prelude of incantations, until Bok Short broke in:

"Now," said he, "I shall put the questions. Thou knowest how to break eggs — so do I. Begin."

"Did the girl die a natural death?"

"Was she murdered?"

"Was she *deng?*"

"Was it done in Ko-Xam?"

"Was it in my house?"

"Am I the culprit?"

At every question that was to be answered in the affirmative, an egg was shivered. But questions that were to be negatived gave the *bo-jao* herculean exertions, to no purpose. In particular the last question caused her to strain and to perspire most convincingly; she went so far as to help herself with the left hand, thus breaking the rules of the game, but not breaking the adamant egg — for she wanted to hide her evil wishes by keeping Bok Short out of the accusation, while ruining the Mission by less dangerous means.

"No indeed!" replied the witch. "My hand is swollen with the effort, and the egg will not break at thy name. Thou art innocent, assuredly." And she put down the obdurate egg upon the ground.

Bok Short bent down, secured the egg, and held it, with professional accuracy, aloft.

"Good men of the Ba-Hnar tribe," he said, "you have witnessed the excessive hardness of this egg. Now if yonder sorceress is a liar and a poisoner and the most foul of human beings, let this egg tell us"—and the egg exploded.

Thereupon, Bok Short, pressing his advantage home, preached against the belief in these *bo-jao,* who cause injustice and misery to so many, and whose lies are so easily proved. After a while, seeing that he was not making much impression, he proposed a further experiment with the egg. He sent Hmur into the village, telling him, in an aside, exactly were to stand; then called upon the witch to tell the assembly where he was. When the latter had named a likely house, Bok Short sent the young men into the village to investigate, and they found Hmur at the opposite

end of the street. At this news the savages stood staring one at the other in dismay.

"Now to business," said Bok Short. "You say that someone of my household *deng*. You say it was not I. Who was it?"

The witch had learned the names of all the members of the household; but she did not know that Yon's true name was Kiet, and that Yon was only a nickname, in common use. So, as Bok Short recited the names of all who lived with him, the egg resisted; when he mentioned Kiet, the witch enquired whether Kiet was a man or a woman (for men are usually not accused of *deng*).

"What is that to thee? Ask thy spirits if Kiet has *deng*," said Bok Short. And the witch, thinking this must be some newcomer, let the name go by.

"In conclusion, Yon has *deng* and Kiet has not," said Bok Short, "and your *bo-jao* drinks lies like water. I have done you no wrong and you have no claim on me. Depart."

It seemed, indeed, impossible to press the accusation. But the Lie is strong, and the Moys went home not one whit shaken in their convic-

tion that the witch could see the spirit-worlds — only in this instance, the excessive radiance of the white man's soul had created confusion in her mind — perhaps even among the spirits, added some, for it really seemed as if these strangers could defy the Iang.

Such, then, was the depth from which the Lord drew Hmur's wife unto himself. She assembled the village, declared that all her magic ministrations had been frauds and evil practises, that her *do-mong* was nothing but a stone, that she renounced her familiar spirit and proclaimed Ba-Iang the one true God. And from that day forward Jieng gave, under her new name, Mary, the example of a model Christian life.

The prayers of Tot for his mother were also heard, ere long, and Hmon received the gift of faith, with such a vivid sense of God's abiding presence that her remaining dozen years of life were spent in continual prayer. Grace seems to have come down in torrents in those early days, to meet the heroism that went up.

Another notable recruit was Poi, who had headed the conspiracy against the Missioners at the time of the forest-fire. Once baptized, he

burned with zeal for the salvation of the savages — one may say that he was the first professional Catechist of the Mission.

These, and some twenty more, soon made Ko-Xam into what truly seemed to be a promising settlement of Christians. The Lie was not slow to see it, with the consequence that petty persecution became the order of the day. One may say without hesitation that the vexatious interference to which the Christians were subjected was inspired by the evil one, for it is altogether against the practice of the Moys to meddle in one another's personal affairs. They will protect themselves against aggression, no doubt; but they will not prevent their neighbor from infuriating the Iang if only himself is to be the loser. In the case of Christianity, however, here as elsewhere, everything was forgotten except the instinctive feeling that the Lie was being done to death and had to be defended. The Christians approached Bok Short in order to induce him to let them build a separate village; but he felt the time had not yet come. If the Christians withdrew from the midst of their heathen brothers, whence would new converts be derived, and what would

be the influence of twenty Christians, cut off from the remainder of the tribe?

Events proved the Missioner to be right, and very soon there came, throughout the tribe, such a reaction of friendliness towards the Mission that Bok Wise and Bok Short both felt that the Lord's hour had struck.

Chapter XIII

A WALK IN THE WOODS.

They were not wrong; the Lord's hour had come indeed — but not His hour of triumph; the *labaar* spoke of the Cross — the passion of the Ba-Hnar Mission had only just begun. But the trouble this time came to it from Annam; and, had not the Lord brought about at that precise moment among the Moys that strong current of affection for His messengers, they and their work would have been wiped out in the storm.

Since Bok Thin and Bok Long had been removed, no other Priest had been sent up to the savages, so that Bok Wise, Bok Short and Thia Dô were eagerly hoping for some new companions in their heroic labor.

At last the saintly Bishop sent a young and zealous Priest, Bok Green, to join the pioneers. He had known them both in Seminary days, but had stayed at home some eighteen months after their departure, in order to get a grounding in

the sciences that would be useful in the opening up of this new country to civilizing influence. But I need say no more of him than that his life was one of those upon the sacrifice of which the Master planned to build the edifice of His Faith among the Moys. Before he had learned the language he died, and was not replaced.

With him came the Deacon Bao, a choice subject, who stepped straight into the place of Dô, at the head of all the perilous ventures of this period.

The newcomers announced that a fresh persecution had broken out in the plains. The Ba-Hnar Mission was expressly named in the new edict of the King, and all Annamese coming from or going to the hills, were to be closely examined. It was for this reason that Bok Green had been sent up at once, before all roads should be completely closed.

Now it happened that, a few days previously, Bok Short had sent two messengers, with letters, to the Bishop. Their names were Dak and Nghin respectively; Dak was constitutionally weak and morally a coward, whereas Nghin was strong and as brave as the bravest of his race—one in fact who exulted in danger and who, time

and again, exposed his life in the service of the Mission. These two, being unwarned, were sure to fall into the trap.

The Deacon Bao at once came forward. "I shall hasten after them," he said, "and give them warning." And in spite of the weariness of the upward journey just accomplished, he started in pursuit.

The situation which it fell to his lot to handle proved thorny in the extreme. He was still a day's journey from the frontier when he met Nghin, hastening back to the hills. The two messengers had stopped in a Ba-Hnar village where once Thia Dô had, it seemed, taken some ashes from a hearth to dry the wound of a beast of burden, thus breaking, in ignorance, a strict rule of unwritten Ba-Hnar law. The villagers of Kon-Go had brought up this ancient sin and, heated by too much wine, had worked themselves into a frenzy, and finally decided to capture the two Christians and sell them to the Annamese. Dak implored mercy, and was promptly gagged. Nghin seized a sword and brandished it to such effect that he was soon clear of the ill-natured village.

Bao and Nghin now made for a friendly hamlet, called Bo-Lu, hoping to induce these people to intervene. But, in spite of their good dispositions, the Bo-Luites declared themselves unable to fight Kon-Go with any chance of victory. And they sent the Missioners to Ba-Ham.

This Ba-Ham, it will be remembered, was the bandit in whose house the Missioners had stayed on their first trip into the mountains. He was a thief and also a freelance, so that very little beyond the inducement of silver would be needed to secure his intervention. And so it proved — but he arrived too late; Dak had been already sold, sent into Annam, and handed over to the Prefect.

He was questioned, flogged and buffeted out of his senses — and at last he told all that he knew of the Ba-Hnar Mission, of its Priests, its quarters, its converts, its Annamese helpers, and its travel-routes to and from the plains.

The reader may think the game was up; if he does he will be in agreement with the Bishop, who, as soon as he got the news, sent money to the Prefect, to close his mouth.

In the Orient, however, you never quite know where you stand, and you can afford to leave most things to Providence. . . .

The Prefect was in a state of abject terror. Why? Because he was only a very small official, responsible to those above him. Now for him to send on such news as this — that three Missioners had settled in the mountains, with a numerous personnel of Annamese and with growing influence on the Moys, that they were in constant communication with the plains and that they had agents all along the various routes — was, unless he could produce the men themselves, tantamount to losing his position; and how under the stars could he ever hope to lay hands on anybody deep in unfriendly forests two hundred miles away? He therefore treated Dak's compromising revelations as absurd, appointed witnesses to the fact that the boy was mad, and set him free. Then, in all haste, he sent word to the Sub-Prefect on the frontier to set out and capture anything and everything belonging to the Ba-Hnar Mission and to bring it, dead or living, to the the Prefecture — failing which the Sub-Prefect might expect to lose his hat and his hair and his

head; to be shot, hanged, and executed; to witness the confiscation of his house and home and family; and to be buried in oblivion and hell.

It was therefore but a few days after the return of Nghin and Bao from their fruitless expedition that a courier came to Ko-Xam from Kiem to his ally Dô. Meanwhile, however, Bao had set out again; he was to go by a long, circuitous route into Annam, see the Bishop and bring or send back news. This trip took almost half a year and was in itself a piece of work that would strike one with inexpressible admiration if this tale were not placed on a level of such heroism that one's every-day vision is distorted. Bao remained for several years with the Bishop and, as we shall see, came back to the hills a Priest.

Kiem's message was: "The mandarin is coming here tomorrow with his soldiers. He will request me to guide him to Ko-Xam. You need have no fear; I shall teach him something of our forests. Still, as it might possibly happen that I should have to lead him eventually as far as your first station, you had better close it for a while."

The three white priests and Thia Dô accord-

ingly all came together in Bok Wise's hut. Here they worked and prayed and waited. Bok Wise tells us naïvely how they made a vow to smoke only one pipe a day till this cloud went by; and he adds that he is afraid they cheated the Almighty by ramming the weed into that pipe till it well-nigh broke. Let me caution the reader against grudging this little consolation to my heroes; it seems to me more rational to disapprove of their cutting themselves off on this occasion from a source of quiet strength, and irritating, by this privation, nerves already too much taxed by want, in the bodily, the mental and the spiritual orders.

Meanwhile Kiem was doing yeoman service on the frontier. The little fat mandarin arrived, bearing in his pocket the terrifying threats of his superior.

"Please understand, Bok Kiem, that I have to get those Annamese and bring them to the King. And as thou art the King's agent hereabouts the matter rests with thee."

"The King has always trusted Kiem," answered this worthy. "We shall start tomorrow. Has the mandarin got provisions for ten days?"

The mandarin had nothing of the kind. And it took a full day to make provisions ready.

"Has the mandarin given notice of his coming?" asked Kiem on the second evening. The mandarin said he had left that to Kiem; and another day went by while Kiem sent messengers with instructions to the villages to do all in their power to obstruct the expedition, whatever he himself might seem to say. Meanwhile he fed the soldiers on Ba-Hnar food and laid the sure foundations of malaria.

Finally they started out, on foot, over the rugged hills. Wherever there was a treacherous marsh or a dangerous torrent, there would lie the necessary path. If anywhere the thickets were impenetrable, that was the way that had to be hewn, with infinite delay. At night Kiem insisted on half the force being set on sentinel duty; by day he never relaxed the stride. Winding in and out of the valleys, crossing, needlessly, the highest hills, he managed, in three days, to knock up half the men with utter exhaustion and with unforgiving fever. Every village was taboo. Here and there, acres of darts had been planted, and Kiem pointed out the necessity of long detours.

The mandarin held on till he, too, felt the touch of fever. Then he asked Kiem whether they were still far off. Kiem thought they were about halfway.

Thereupon the mandarin addressed his soldiers. "My children, you are weary and I am accountable for your lives. You will bear witness for me that this is a wild goose chase. Let us go home." The retreat was sounded — and in half a day the party was back in Kiem's abode. But so cordial was his host that it never occurred to the mandarin that Kiem was paddling his own canoe.

Another attempt was made a little later, but was frustrated this time by the friendship of the Moys in general towards the Mission. The soldiers could get no guides, and again went home.

The Missioners had occasion to admire the Hand of God in this. For if the persecution had broken out while they were still the object of suspicion on every hand, the Cross would have crushed instead of saving; in the early days it had been borne individually by the Missioners, each and all; and by the time the Mission itself

had to bear it, strength sufficient had been gathered to bear it fruitfully.

Kiem further aided his ally by transporting to and from Annam, by means of his private elephants, whatever the Mission desired during the persecution. The frontier officers dared not molest the agent of their own King. And eventually they came to let even known messengers of the Mission go through, because it was more dangerous to hold them without holding the Missioners themselves than it was to suffer a convenient distracton as they went by.

Chapter XIV

THE FIRST CALL.

No sooner had the Missioners separated after this alarm than trouble came, in plenty, to Bok Wise.

All his Christians were young people, most of them mere children; there were more than twenty when his companions left him. A year from that date, eight had died. The first to die was a young girl, who was carried off in a few days by hemorrhage; the next fell a victim to a snake; four boys were taken in two days by a mysterious fever; one got, of all unlikely things, appendicitis. And at last Pat himself, the first-born of Bok Wise and his best-beloved, was taken by the Lord.

One afternoon Bok Wise went out into the forest, where he knew that Pat was watching for birds in his father's field. Suddenly he came upon the boy, seated on a stone by the water of a running brook, his head between his hands. The Priest came up unperceived and spoke.

"Is that the way thou watchest thy father's field?" he said — and then, as the boy lifted a tear-stained face, "what is it, my little one, that makes thee weep?"

"I cannot say," replied the boy, cuddling against his friend and master. "It is both pain and joy. I sat down beside this water to say my Rosary. Then I thought of my Communion this morning, then of all my sins, and, seeing God so good and myself so wicked, I felt the tears come up. Thou canst explain these things — knowing as thou art — but to me it is very strange thus to be shedding tears and to be feeling, all the while, a great joy within my heart."

To find a child of the savages thus touched by grace caused the Priest more of emotion than he cared to show. He told him how all that comes from God, even sorrow for sin and even the Cross itself, is turned into joy in the loving heart, into a joy surpassing all that earth can offer. And then he asked if Pat ever prayed for him: "A Priest, more than any other, needs the help of God."

"Often I pray for thee," said Pat; "all my happiness is from thee. And I was thinking just

now that if no more *labaars* could come to thee from thy own people and if thou didst no longer get from them beads and tin to exchange with our villagers for rice, I should work at night and double the size of my father's field, that it might feed thee, too."

Such was the transformation which the Faith had wrought in the once brutal, selfish heart of a little savage. And now God's time had come and he was to die.

It may here be added that Pat had, shortly before, brought both Lam and Nam, his father and big brother, into the Church. Lam had been sick unto death; over his prostrate form, Pat and Nam had argued out the question of religion, each trying to drag the other to his own side. Nam had vowed to sacrifice a goat and a pig and a bullock to the fetiches, and Pat had vowed to fast on certain days, if Lam recovered — which he did. As soon as he was better, he spoke to Nam.

"Boy," he said, "while I was sick thy brother spoke much wisdom unto thee. Why art thou obdurate?"

"Shall it be said," answered the elder son,

"that the little one rules the big one, among thy sons?"

"Boy," replied Lam, "I will be ruled by the counsel he gave to thee. Wilt thou then stand alone?"

Ere long Nam overcame his pride, and the three were joined in one faith. And the love that grew up between them was beautiful to behold.

One sweltering noon, Pat climbed to mend the roof of his father's hut, heedless of the sun—and he came down with all the symptoms of brain fever. Almost at once he started raving; whenever he noticed Bok Wise kneeling by his side, he would speak of God and clutch the crucifix that hung around his neck—but all unconciously or in the frenzy of his fever. And thus, on the third day, he died.

Bok Wise, with tender hands, bathed and dressed the body, and knelt to pray. He could not stay his tears, and was reproaching himself for his weakness when the words of one of the onlookers: "See how he loved him!" reminded him that Jesus too had wept.

The savages have such fear of ghosts that all

their funeral rites aim at laying the dead to rest, lest he should hurt them. Close relatives often wound themselves severely, to convince the dead of their love and so to avoid the possibility of vengeance on suspected indifference. Thus Lam and Nam had to declare in public that they had no intention of damaging themselves; for they were closely watched for several days.

Pat's friends each brought a necklace of colored beads, and placed it round his neck, till the body carried its own weight in glass. A heavy log was hollowed, and, as is usual with the Moys, the body was stuffed into a space hardly large enough to hold it. A grave was dug under an ancient tree close to the village, and the simple splendid ritual of the Church confided to mother earth the keeping of the first-fruits of so much suffering till the day of wrath and of salvation, till That Day.

In contrast to these peaceful rites, let me here detail what the pagan Moys go through at every death. Some of these superstitions, indeed, were carried out over the grave of Pat by his pagan friends when the Christian relatives were not at hand.

MUSIC OF THE MOUNTAINS

A BA-HNAR GRAVE

Immediately after the body has been dressed, keening is begun, vociferous and interminable, to the accompaniment of gongs and tam-tams.

Meanwhile, if the family is rich enough, a bullock and a pig are slaughtered and wine prepared. Each relative takes a little bamboo tube, fills it with wine and scraps of meat, and, with loathsome realism, feeds the corpse: "You are dead!" he says, "I give you wine and food to show how much I love you.—Do not hurt us; be good to us; make us live long."

Then by the side of the corpse are placed a little cup, a pickaxe, beads, and all that he may need to live contented in the other world—and the whole collection is wrapped, with the corpse, in a piece of matting.

When the procession starts out for the grave, with the corpse on a stretcher of branches; gongs go moaning before it, and behind come those who bear the arms and the pipe of the departed.

All his belongings are placed in or on the grave, over which a tall and graceful roof of thatch is built. For six days, the friends of the family keep close watch, lest anyone should wound or even kill himself out of devotion to or

terror of the dead. At sundown, all go to the grave and sit smoking, the dead man's pipe being passed around. Occasionally a friend will rise and blow smoke down a hole in the earth, for the benefit of the dead.

In the same way, at the beginning of each lunar month, friends assemble at the grave, with lamentations and wild music and pour wine down a hole over the corpse's head.

It is only after a full year has elapsed that the dead may be considered fixed in the other world. The final ceremony consists chiefly in various obscenities practised upon the grave. Then a permanent roof is placed over the tomb; sugar cane and manioc and banana-trees are planted; clay figures of the dead, bearing his pipe, are stationed under the roof. Wine is poured down to him for the last time and food is hung, in bamboo tubes, close by. A hen is tied lightly to the grave, so that it can, eventually, escape into the forest; but if the hen comes back into the village, the ghost is sure to follow.

This belief in ghosts is as confirmed among the Moys as among the spiritists of our own race. The Missioners at first laughed at the stories

that were brought to them; but soon they found that their incredulity in this matter caused the Moys to doubt their veracity in other things; so they followed the plan of saying:

"The dead go at once either to purgatory, or to hell or heaven. If you think you see them and hear their voices, it may be your imagination or it may be an evil Iang, a devil."

Even in the case of Pat, strange manifestations were not lacking. Nam, who for many days had walked with tearful eyes, was consoled at last by what we may put down as a dream — in which Pat came to him, luminous, from an infinite height and told him of his joy in heaven and of his desire to see his beloved brother join him there.

A few days later Nam went out to join his father in the night-watch over the ripening corn. On his way, he met Lam returning with some precipitation.

"Art thou not watching the field tonight?" asked the boy.

"Watch who watch may," said Lam. "The devil has scared me till I am all a-tremble."

"One watcher is enough," said Nam, "and I

am not afraid." Indeed Nam was already noted for his courage.

Hardly had he reached the field and climbed eight feet above it onto the watcher's platform when he heard a gruesome din on the ground below.

"So my father was right," he said aloud. "Wait a minute, till I light my fire and my pipe, and then I shall attend to thee."

While he was busy with these important occupations, the noise changed to that of a man vomiting with fearful effort.

"Who has been eating too much?" taunted Nam. "And who is going to run away when I come down from my perch, with my Rosary and Crucifix?" So saying he slid down the pole and stood waiting, with his Rosary round his neck, a Crucifix in his left hand and a weapon in his right. The noise broke out behind him, in the darkness. As he turned, it was at his back; and thus again and again.

"If I could face thee, pig, I could test this blade on thee. But I have other weapons. I renounced thee when I was baptized, and my trust is in the Lord. Vomit thy belly-full. I am

going up to say my prayers, and sleep." And with this pretty speech, which pales in the translation and in reduction to terms which I can bring myself to print, Nam ended the interview, and went up to bed.

Chapter XV

CLEANING UP THE TOWN.

While Bok Wise was thus losing the flower of his flock and finding all progress blocked by the terrifying manner of their death, Bok Short was reaping a rich harvest around Ko-Xam.

In particular he captured one whole village by a clever piece of strategy. The Moys, owing to their contempt for the plough, move their villages with considerable frequency. It is on the occasion of these changes that all taboos and superstitious practices are enacted, which will bind in the new locality. At these times customs may be changed with impunity, provided one man be found to carry the responsibility before the Iang.

Now Po-Nang, a village near Ko-Xam, was about to move. Bok Short offered to take upon himself the wrath of all the Iang provided Christian practices should be substituted for all the rites which should be prescribed in a new village.

The proposal was accepted with delight; for it

was fear of the Iang that made life a burden; the people of Po-Nang would most willingly listen to Bok Short's instructions, if the latter would first deliver them from the vengeance of the spirits and from all the practices which, if they were once performed on a new village-site, would bind as long as the village lasted.

Accordingly Bok Short took up his residence for a time in the new Po-Nang. He blessed the site of each new house, and, omitting the pagan practices, gave the first stroke of the pickaxe in the place where a hole was to be dug for the central pillar. Again, he would touch and bless the pillar as it was lowered into the hole.

The second portion of his office was that of lighting the fire on each new hearth. The hearth consists of a frame of wood, filled with sand, and set in the middle of the floor. Bok Short's part was to place the first handful of sand in the frame, and also to light the fire. This he accomplished in every house, his Ritual in hand, while the savages expected him, each moment, to be pulverized by some powerful Iang whose customary worship he omitted.

Then came the water. Endless superstitions

were wont to attend the drawing of the first water from the flowing stream. Bok Short, here again, simplified matters, to everybody's satisfaction. He blessed the stream, filled each woman's bamboo tube, and handed it back, unburdened with any obligations of future superstition.

Finally, he suggested carrying off the large and venerable fetish that was hung at the entrance of the old Po-Nang. "Who would be bold enough to touch so powerful a being?" cried the savages in alarm; "but indeed it would be a blessing if we could be rid of its exactions." Bok Short needed no further telling; he dislodged the fetish, and, with unfeigned delight, tossed it to a cool resting-place in the bed of the River Bla.

The superstitions in regard to the new rice were not so easily handled. Almost every family is in alliance with Iang-Xo-ri, the spirit of Plenty. If you find in your field an agglomeration of small crystals, or if, on any festival of the fields, you meet with one or other of the innumerable fetishes which symbolize that desirable spirit, you need only dream, the following night, that Xo-ri offers you her friendship—and any witch will tell you what treatment she requires.

A scientific examination of her special taboos belongs rather to a textbook of comparative religions than to a missionary story. But she is too interesting a personage to be passed over, even here, in silence.

First of all, rice "on foot" is absolutely sacred; to pull a blade or to lop a leaf is sacrilege. So that the owner of a buffalo which has strayed, while grazing, into a field of rice, will not escape a heavy fine, be he a stranger and entirely void of malice.

After the harvest, when the rice is garnered into little granaries outside the village, the rice for sowing is always kept apart from the rice for eating; and if it is considered a double crime to steal even the latter, no sacrilege equals the theft of the former, in which Xo-ri resides in person. Should a granary be burned, however accidentally, a substantial sacrifice of reparation will always be required.

Xo-ri has many avatars — and any lunatic who strays about the forests alone runs a fair chance of receiving adoration in her name. It is of the utmost importance to a Moy to be thoroughly conversant with her usual forms, because, if he dreams of one of them, he is dreaming luck or

ruin to his harvest; should he dream of finding or receiving, say, a pickaxe, all is well; should a banian-tree enter into his dream, he will have so much rice that strangers will flock to buy it as the birds to devour the banian's berries; these happy prospects he will accept with pleasure, but not with thanks — for a Ba-Hnar never troubles with a divinity unless it has to be placated. But should he dream of eating a buffalo, then he will surely die before the harvest; to dream of muddy water is, no less, an insult to Xo-ri; as for the presence, in a dream, of a dead monkey being carried home by a couple of hunters, this is a sure foreboding of one's own carrying forth to the grave — and all these things (not to speak of a million more concerning every detail of existence) must be confided to the witches; and the penalty will be heavy in proportion to the danger.

As the Missioners grew familiar with all these intricacies of superstition, it will be easily understood how their hearts swelled with pity and how they offered themselves, with ever-growing willingness, to suffer all that might be needed to ransom those precious souls from a slavery that respected not even the sacred privacy of sleep.

Chapter XVI

ONE WHO WENT SIMPLY.

Bok Wise, after the death of his little Pat and his other children, had one of those spells of loneliness in which human nature sometimes reasserts itself, as it did in the Garden of Olives. The long months that elapsed before the impression of those deaths had passed from the minds of the savages and before any further signs of progress were forthcoming, left him in a state of deep depression, which was relieved only by the occasional visits of Bok Short.

And when at last the cloud had gone by and he was himself again, another passion was at hand.

One day he received messengers with letters from Annam; and there were letters, too, from home. It may be readily surmised which letters he read first. The Missioner may give up home — as the soldier gives up life — but his dear ones are no less dear and the separation is no less an exile.

Bok Wise opened his home letters first and read them, one by one, through a mist of tears, renewing, the while, his sacrifice, and praying for his friends — and for that mother, now old and feeble, who still so willingly gave him up to God. It was over a year since he had heard from home.

Then he opened a little folded slip that had been almost hidden in the packet. It was a scribbled note, and ran:

"Bok Short is dead.

Thia Bao."

Bok Wise gasped in horror and uttered a loud cry that brought a dozen faces to his door. The news was so utterly unexpected, it was in such harrowing contrast with the peace in which he had been basking as he read the news from home; it meant the blasting of such deep hopes and the breaking of such sacred ties, that the cry escaped him as it would have done if a dark hand had stabbed him in the back.

As he made his way out of the village towards Ko-Xam, the savage who had brought the letter followed him and gave him some details. But the full story is as follows:

On the previous morning there had arrived a party from Annam, headed by Bao, who was coming back, a Priest, to work among the Moys. Before opening his letters Bok Short had exchanged confessions with Thia Bao, as the custom is among Missioners when meetings are so rare; this sacred duty is the first to be performed.

Then, looking over his envelopes, he had seen a letter from the Bishop. This he had opened first. It contained orders for him to return into Annam, to be consecrated as coadjutor. So deep and painful was the impression made on him by this intelligence that he laid aside his other letters and sat sorrowful, brooding over the news.

At the midday meal he had eaten nothing, but listened vaguely to all Thia Bao had to tell him of the outer world. In the afternoon he had felt ill, but had rung the bell as usual for his catechism class, "the Missioner's first duty," as he called it. With the children he was merry and persuasive; but he sent them away sooner than was his wont. Hardly were they out of the house than he fell headlong to the ground. Thia Bao anointed him while he yet breathed, but he died without another word than that by which he had told the little

ones to "go home and live the lesson" he had taught them.

Bok Wise walked so fast that no savage could keep up with him. He did the two-days' trip in one. And it was only when he got within an hour of Ko-Xam, to a place where he must cross a river, that he noticed that his blood was flowing freely and that thousands of leeches were fixed upon his flesh. It had rained all day, and the river was impassable — so that all his haste was vain, and he was fain to eat out his heart all night on the hither bank.

When at last he reached his destination, he found the house surrounded by an ever-growing crowd of weeping savages. Bok Short had endeared himself to everyone, and not a Moy, Christian or heathen, but felt his loss intensely. And it took Bok Wise all the courage of his faith to talk to these poor orphans of resignation and of the joys of heaven. But when he came to the description of his friend's heroic life, his voice went up and out till it brought back the moaning echoes of the forest.

That evening, a drunken heathen in a neighboring village learned of the event, and, thought-

lessly, said he was glad to hear it. This word came back, like a burning arrow, to Ko-Xam—and war was imminent. Only the entreaties of Bok Wise averted it, and a fine of two buffaloes was levied by Ko-Xam on the village of the offender.

And now Bok Wise was the only white Priest in the Mission; Dô and Bao rested upon him; every problem came to him for solution; he was the only barrier between the Moys and Hell.

There followed two harrowing years, of which we shall tell after relating the events which were going forward meanwhile in the plains, and which reacted with much severity on the Ba-Hnar Mission.

Chapter XVII

THE BISHOP BEHIND THE BARS.

When the first party left Annam for the Moy country in 1848, we saw it hiding with the greatest care as long as it was in the domains of His most pagan Highness of Hué, Tu-Duc. That king had been only a year on the throne at the time and had not yet done more than follow the tradition of his dynasty in a vague hostility to Christ.

As time went on he became increasingly ferocious, until at last the reports of the Missioners upon his cruelty brought about the appearance of armed ships along his coast.

Let me at once clear up this matter, and be done with it. Nothing is easier than to understand how the Missioners should, in the best of faith, have sought relief for their Christians (already half a million strong in Annam) from perpetual persecution, and how, when occasion offered, they should have accepted, not to say solicited, the in-

tervention of European arms. No doubt it was an inevitable move; none the less, it was a fatal one. For it put the persecution on a patriotic footing which awakened, in the smallest of officials, a zeal which Oriental indifference in matters of religion would never have permitted on the ground of creed alone. We Missioners boast of leaving our country to adopt a heathen people as our own; let us make sure that we do leave our country, whatever it may be, that we do sever our connection with its politics and ambitions, its name and influence, its advantages and protection — and offer Christ on His own merits to all the peoples of the earth.

It was in the tenth year after the opening of our story that Tu Duc, thoroughly roused by intervention from without, determined to wipe out Christianity.

In reading of his exploits, let us realize that there are still men alive who saw these things, or suffered them, and that they were happening while many of my readers were learning, in comfortable schoolrooms, that the first commandment forbids us to deny the faith — and while, in all probability, the Foreign Mission Idea was quite

the last that anybody thought of fostering in their souls.

The first edict was general. The mandarins were upbraided for their apathy in regard to the "blackguards" known as "Christians." During the ensuing year every effort was to be made to have them observe all the Buddhist ritual for weddings, funerals and the like. Those who proved obstinate were to be sent to the army, if men, and to slavery, if women.

The second edict deplored the increasing number of Christians in government service, and enacted that all Christian mandarins above the eighth degree were to be strangled and all below dismissed.

Then came in quick succession, several reminders. Next a special edict against the native nuns. The convents had been disbanded, but the Sisters, in their home villages, were to the fore in every kind of service to the cause; their specialty was the carrying of messages between the stations. They were now ordered to marry and keep quiet . . . and by the same token all passports were to be refused to Christians.

Finally came an edict of dispersion!

" 1. All who bear the name of Christ, be they rich or poor, young or old, men or women, shall be scattered in the pagan villages.

" 2. Every pagan village shall be responsible for one Christian to every five inhabitants.

" 3. All the property of the Christians shall pass to the pagan villages.

" 4. The men shall be sent to one Province and the women to another. The children shall be the property of any pagan who chooses to adopt them.

" 5. Even apostates shall be treated as above, because experience shows that their change of mind is not sincere.

" 6. Before leaving, every Christian, man, woman and child, shall be branded. On the left check shall be written the two words 'Perverse Religion' and on the right cheek the name of the Province from which the subject shall not be allowed to move."

This edict was carried out with the strictest literalness.

Every Prefecture was flooded with prisoners; scribes were on hand with porcelain stilettos, to brand the checks of the victims — a horrible torture in itself. If the wound healed and left but a faint impression, the hideous operation was renewed — with such success that, for twenty

years, Annam was full of these witnesses to the final victory of faith over tyranny; and even today an occasional one is seen.

An instance is recorded of one boy who, deeming the word "Perverse" an insult to the other word "Religion," disfigured it with his nails. He was whipped, and branded again, and again contrived to blot out the mark by tearing his own flesh. The whip not subduing this bold spirit, the sword was requisitioned, and the martyr was beheaded.

The reader will forgive me for not harrowing his feelings further with the screams of tortured children, the swish of flays, the nausea of steaming blood. In the pagan villages the Christians were parked like cattle in a pen, sleeping in the mud under the rain and working in droves under the lash. Every Mission station was burned and every hut known to be the property of a Christian was destroyed.

For the Missioners life became well-nigh impossible. Not only could they perform no ministry, but they could only keep in contact with a very limited number of the faithful, lest, on being arrested, they should compromise more than was absolutely necessary.

Five or six of the Missioners had already been martyred in this persecution when the Bishop of the *labaar* decided to disband his men. Not all of the martyrs were subjects of our Bishop, for there were several Vicariates throughout Annam, but the toll of his own dead was more than heavy enough. Théophane Vénard is among the best known victims of Tu-Duc's fury. He was a young Priest of some ten-years' standing; and the letters which he wrote home to his father and beloved sister, especially those pencilled during the long days which he spent squatting in a cage previous to his decapitation, have earned him the love of thousands the world over, as his passion earned for him the honors of the altar. Several Dominicans, in Northern Tonkin, were also among the martyrs.

In four years, one hundred and fifteen native Priests were martyred, out of a possible three hundred. And it is a splendid witness to their spirit and to their training that not one is recorded to have weakened, whether the whip ploughed his back, or the pincers twisted his flesh, or the red-hot tongs made festering wounds, or thirst or hunger or exposure were the means em-

ployed;—in every instance faith proved the master of death. Of the Christians, some forty thousand were killed, and almost *all* the rest were branded and reduced to the extremest misery—and here too, including weaklings of every description, probably not more than thirty per cent lost courage and went under for a time.

It was, of course, the ambition of every Priest to secure the martyr's palm. But the Bishop, whose duty bade him make provision for the future, finally decided to send away to safety the few white Priests who were left and with them the native students for the priesthood. He himself would stay with the native priests, and direct the Mission till his inevitable capture.

This occurred, however, almost immediately after the departure of the students and their masters. He had been sheltered only a few days in a newly-chosen refuge, the house of a widow, named Ba-Lu, when, at the beginning of his Mass, the house was surrounded by the soldiery. The Bishop unvested and, with his acolytes, entered a hiding-place—but the vestments were forgotten, and their presence was evidence enough. The mandarin chained and flogged every

member of the household, and having extracted nothing, sat down to wait. The visit not having been expected, provisions had not been gathered in the hiding-place, — and, on the third day, rather than die of hunger, the Bishop and his boys came out.

The soldiers threw themselves upon him as upon a wild beast of the forest. They knocked him down and gagged him, and, indeed, would have gone further, but that the mandarin, sure now of quick promotion, could afford to be polite — pending orders.

On the third day the orders came. The Bishop was to be caged and carried to the Prefecture.

Crouching, therefore, in a narrow wicker cage, the Bishop was carried forth. Now, it was the rainy season. Not only was he drenched with the downpour, but at every swollen river, as the soldiers struggled across, he was given a drowning bath.

During this journey across the green plains of rice, amid the bamboo-clumps, through the miserable villages of Annam, the Bishop had before his eyes the chain of mountains behind which his Ba-Hnar Mission lay. And his heart found rest in the certainty which the Lord had given him

that, whatever the fate of his martyred church in the plains below, up in the mountains was another, which, born in travail and nurtured among thorns, was destined to live and grow and flourish. And the prayers of the witness of Christ went up for the coming of that hour.

On arrival at the Prefecture, the Bishop was thrown into the common jail, amid the filth and the vermin and the dull despair of all that was most wretched in humanity. His fellow-prisoners tried to tear his clothes from him — for they were mostly naked — and they insulted him, as the thief his fellow-Crucified.

The Bishop, however, having been so long in wet garments, was taken with a cruel fever. On the second day he was in the throes of dysentery. Such a malady in such a place was a ten-fold torment, and the Bishop sank rapidly beneath it.

He was questioned only once, and without torture, for the Prefect feared lest he should die under the lash.

"Why did you come to this country?"

"To preach religion."

"How long have you been here?"

"Thirty-four years."

Then he was asked in what provinces he had preached, how long he had been staying with Ba-Lu, and, above all, what he knew of foreign intervention in Annam.

It was useless to ask further questions. Admitting that he was a Christian Priest, he was destined to certain death, and all that remained was to wait for orders from the capital.

On the tenth day word was received that the prisoner should be decapitated instantly. He had however, died the previous night.

The soldiers wanted to decapitate the body, which was still unburied. But the Prefect would not consent. His orders were that the body should be tied up between four bamboos, and buried.

Three months later, instructions came from Hué to throw the body of "the religious chief" into the sea; it was in consequence exhumed. Some Christians had bribed the soldiers to put aside some of the bones. But the body, in spite of having lain for fourteen weeks in the damp earth, was perfectly intact, and was thrown whole into the sea.*

* Bishop Cuénot was beatified by Pope Pius X, along with Théophane Vénard and others, in 1910.

Chapter XVIII

FEAR IN THE FOREST.

After the death of Bok Short, the months wore on, increasingly burdensome to Bok Wise. It was not his poverty and privations that worried him; he patched his old clothes until, laid flat, they would have made a very tolerable checkerboard; he kept his only pair of shoes for saying Mass; he lived on what the hands of his household could draw from mother earth; he took his fevers when they came, as a child his scoldings — and gave not a further thought of pity to his body.

He experienced, indeed, what any Missioner in a rough field will tell you, viz., that physical hardships do but stimulate instead of crushing.

In the spirit, however, he suffered cruel agony. On his solitary soul fell the dark night of utter loneliness; his outer self, while the inmost will lay dormant, was clutched in the coils of woe; waves of loathing and ennui broke by turns upon

him; weariness enveloped him; and there rose about him, threatening to submerge his very being, the dark waters of despair.

During two mortal years he was held in his mountains as in a prison, his only information being such fragmentary news as he could gather from the Annamese who traded on the frontier.

When at last a messenger got through, it was to tell a tale of utter ruin. Who was the head of the Mission? No one knew. When would the bloodshed end? No one could guess. Meanwhile both wine and corn were giving out, and Mass could be said but rarely. The Christians, who were growing fast in numbers, were denied The Bread of Life.

The time had come to take serious action, and Bok Wise decided to go down into the plains. He arrived at the psychological moment. The edicts of extermination were on the point of being withdrawn; and, moreover, two new Missioners having come out from Europe, he was able to secure one for the Ba-Hnar Mission.

He tells of his first meeting with the new Priest, in a vein of humor that shows how all his sufferings had seared but the surface of his

being, leaving the inner man intact. He had half forgotten his own language, and greeted his new colleague with such a mixture of quaint idioms that both were kept bubbling with laughter for many days. His apparel, too, was unique — but that was more easily set right.

When he returned into his mountains, he was greeted everywhere with vociferous joy, and it seemed as if the day had come when the cause of truth should triumph.

But the chalice had not yet been emptied. In a few months, thousands were converted. The new Missioner did splendid work — and the two Annamese, Thia Bao and Thia Dô, showed, in success, the same level-headed energy as in their earlier adventures. Then came the Cross again.

Thia Dô was recalled, for a time, to help in the reconstruction of the ruined parishes of Annam. Hmur met with an accident in the forest, and died of blood-poisoning as a result of a slight gash from a tiger's paw. The new Missioner was confined to his mat by an endless series of fevers, and grew, in half a year, so thin that "every bone in his body could be counted." His days of usefulness were over.

And it was at this juncture that an Annamese arrived, bearing the germs of smallpox. He was laid up in Thia Bao's village, at Ro-Hai; and, by the time the nature of his disease was known, other cases had appeared.

As soon as the news was noised abroad, the wildest terror took possession of the entire country. Every village planted darts and traps to keep out all visitors. And an agony of suspense ensued.

It was several weeks before any cases were reported elsewhere than in Ro-Hai. At last, however, in four or five places at once, the dreaded signs appeared. And finally, no barrier availing against this subtle plague, the entire country was a prey to it.

We have all seen the anxiety of the influenza days when, in our own homes, thousands were laid low; even in the midst of civilization the experience was not a cheerful one. Some of us have gone through the sieges of the plague or cholera in an Indian village — and certainly never wish to see the like again. But these things are mere child's play to what the Ba-Hnar Missionary saw in that appalling year.

Mad with terror, driven by their witches, goaded by all the animal instincts of a savage race, the Moys became as wild as the jungle tigers.

As soon as a case was declared in any village, the wretch was left to rot away, while his fellows took refuge in the deepest thickets of the forest; each killing his own food and defending himself against the approach of any other. But the smallpox followed them. While the villages were strewn with corpses that filled the air with putrefaction, the forest glades were littered with bones and limbs torn by the wild beasts, from defenceless, dead or living, bodies. The streams were blocked with the remains of those who had dragged themselves there to drink but had not had strength to raise their heads from the water again.

Bok Wise was in Ko-Xam, which was spared during a month or more. Then at last, one night, Bok Wise was called. A young man was sick; was it the dread disease? On hearing that it was, the relatives wanted instantly to disperse among the thickets. Bok Wise prevailed upon them to wait. With the help of his Annamese attendants, he carried the patient out into the woods, built

a shelter over him, and, when morning came, returned into the village. He called the people together and bade them listen. There was a case of smallpox among them, but he had taken it out into the forest and would look after it himself. It might be that more would follow, though the Lord had protected Ko-Xam hitherto. In any event, they were to stay together, for if they fled they would most likely die of exposure in the forest, and die without a Priest. His counsel prevailed, and no one moved.

This case was cured before another was detected. The air was by this time full of pestilence, and further escape seemed, as indeed it was, impossible. Sooner or later, every member of the Christian community of Ko-Xam went down, more or less grievously attacked. Nevertheless Bok Wise kept to the plan of segregation, which offered one very great advantage: whereas in less careful villages all were sick together, in Ko-Xam there were always hands enough, among the cured or the still immune to carry on the necessary labor in the fields. So that when, elsewhere, famine followed upon sickness, in Ko-Xam there was plenty and to spare.

As soon as Bok Wise was free to move among the villages, he was kept busy night and day — as was Thia Bao around Ro-Hai. They had no remedies, but they had love; and many were those whom they saved from dying of sheer neglect. And of those who were to die, not one refused the gift of Faith in the supreme hour. In the midst of justice, mercy was still most powerful — and thousands of those souls, whom no other circumstance could have withdrawn from the slavery of the fetishes, came, under stress of suffering, to the liberty of the children of light.

Among the Christians the last victim of the small-pox was — Thia Bao.

"My God!" writes Bok Wise. "For my sins I am condemned to bury my brothers one by one and to remain forever here below, purifying my soul till it be worthy to join theirs in Thine embrace. Thy will be done."

And now he was indeed alone. Not only had all the Priests whose names have flitted through these pages gone to their reward, but of all the others whom we know by name Tot was the only Christian left, and Kiem the only pagan.

Tot was now a strapping youth, and, just after

the epidemic, he took to wife an orphan girl whom his mother had loved and trained with this very end in view; she was as much above the average Moy as Tot himself. Among these people the wife is not a slave, as she usually is among the pagans. She does not appear in the common-house nor take any public action, but her counsel is the prevailing one at home — and consequently in the assembly too. Possibly this state of things may be due to the fact that almost all *bo-jaos* are women; if so, it is the only ray of light that issues from the hideous pall of darkness which the black art lays upon the tribe.

However this may be, Tot in the assembly, backed by Loi, his good wife, in the home, was very soon a power. And as he was fully supported by Bok Wise, who rightly placed entire confidence in him, Tot ere long became, young as he was, the recognized chief of all the Christians.

Chapter XIX

TWO LINKS MAKE A CHAIN.

Now let me ask the reader to sit down and think. Let him review Bok Wise's long career and try to find something new for him to suffer before he die. Do not the resources of Hell seem truly to have been exhausted against this man? He has suffered agonies in his body, in his mind, in his heart, in his brethren, in his children — in every fibre of his being. May he not go down in peace unto the grave?

But I set out to tell a story that I regard as symbolical of all apostolate. And the type must follow the Perfect Model — to the end.

After the smallpox, the Christians were very numerous around Ko-Xam, and the Mission gave fair promise, if only Priests could be secured. Physically, conditions improved rapidly, and soon the rice was growing up again on every side.

One day Bok Wise awoke from a little nap —

alas, he was getting old — with a curious dull throbbing in his ears, like unbroken, distant thunder. He thought prosaically of the quinine which he had brought back from his trip down to the plains and which he was using against the fevers. But the noise grew, and, as he went out, he saw that others too were conscious of it. Absolute ignorance of its origin made the dull rumor strangely terrifying. It was half an hour before the cause appeared; the sky grew dark with moving patches, as if all the birds in creation had decided to migrate. Thicker and thicker grew the clouds, falling lower and lower, until at last the locusts began to rain upon the village — all too clear an explanation.

There was absolutely nothing to be done. For three days the whole Moy country was besieged; the promising crops were the first to go; then the undergrowth; and then the forest-leaves and grass and ferns. And the world of men sat stunned beneath this hideous new terror. Then, by degrees, the locusts rose and flew away to carry destruction to the plains.

No sooner had they gone than the Moys to the east arose like one man and vowed vengeance on

the Christians. It was these defiers of the Iang who had brought the smallpox; it was they who had called the locusts; let them perish.

Now, everybody round Ko-Xam was aware that the Mission had suffered like the rest, and was, even now, in want. So that there was no split in the home forces. A firm resistance was organized, darts were planted, and guards were set. Owing to conditions in Annam, no firearms had as yet been conveyed into the Mission; it was to be war *à la sauvage*. Bok Wise did not think there would be much bloodshed — there never is in the warfare of the Moys — and moreover he counted on being able to talk the enemy into sweet reasonableness when he should appear.

The first attack, however, was so well managed, by night, that several Christians were captured and carried off to slavery.

Emboldened, the invaders returned by daylight. Bok Wise knelt in the middle of his village and bade the Christians pray with him, that peace might be achieved. He hung his missionary cross about his neck, took his Rosary in his hand, and went to stand upon a hillock near the palisade.

There was not an enemy to be seen, but he was well aware that each tree-trunk of the forest hid its man. His voice was trumpet-clear and he knew that many would hear his words.

"Children of the Forest," he said, "listen to Bok An."

"For fifteen years I have lived among you, cherished you and taught you. And I love you still, my little ones.

"And now a Lie has entered into your hearts. You say that we Christians brought the sickness and the locusts to your midst. Go to yonder graves and see how many of my precious ones lie dead. Go to yonder fields and see whether our crops were spared. Open your eyes and do not wrong us, for a Lie.

"I came into these forests strong in the assurance that you would love the Truth when it was shown to you. Not one particle of all that I have endured amongst you do I grudge. For I have a *labaar* that says you will, most certainly, believe. Only listen to my voice now ere you do damage of which you will repent."

He had more to say. But a shrill voice broke out among the trees.

"Ba-Hnars! Ba-Hnars. Listen to no sweet speaking. Half of your men are dead by this white man's hand; the other half are hungry by the doing of the Spirits he controls. Let him die — and if he haunt you after death, the witches will protect you."

The speaker came out into the open, foam at her mouth, a bow in her left hand, her hair standing up on end. At a glance Bok Wise knew the aged witch whom, long ago, he had discomfited in the matter of the broken eggs. Now she was evidently in a frenzy of devilish fury bordering on possession.

The young men of Ko-Xam were burning with eagerness to shoot her down. But Bok Wise would not let them shed first blood. He raised his arm to signal his desire, — and at that instant the witch, who was somewhat to his right, uttered a shrill scream and sped an arrow straight into his side, then, turning, she ran headlong and threw herself among the rocks and rapids of the River Bla.

Bok Wise had fallen and he knew that he was dying. They carried him quickly to his hut and laid him on a mat. No one was allowed to enter

but Tot and the Annamese. As they staunched his blood, he prayed—making that offering of himself that he had taught so many, in his time, to make. Then, seeing the uselessness of all their efforts and feeling his strength depart, he spoke to Tot.

"Tot, go to where I fell; stand on that same hillock; and say this to our enemies: 'Bok An is about to die. He bids me say that he is not angry with you. He would like the heads of your expedition to come in to him. He will neither hurt them nor fine them; but he wants to speak to them, that they may know he will not haunt them after death. If, therefore, ye will come, leave there your weapons; we too shall pile ours before the common-house, and make peace.' Go, my little one, and speak."

Bok Wise had guessed aright that the enemy would be more terrified by what had happened than by the severest possible defeat. They had, in fact, for the most part, fled. The fact that a woman, be she a witch, had used the bow, was omen bad enough; her instant death was worse; but most unbearable of all was the thought of the spirit of Bok An coming, in the dark night,

to haunt their villages. What he had said was clearly true, his own had suffered with the rest — and, if this war was an injustice, never would they be free of his vengeance from the other world.

Tot's words therefore reassured them greatly, and such chiefs as had not fled came willingly to Bok Wise.

The priest had himself laid on the balcony, the *pra,* before his house. And thence he spoke, with what little strength was left.

"My little children, you have grieved Ba-Iang, the Father Spirit; yet he will not punish you if you repent. There will come unto you others to teach what I have taught; they will tell you how to make reparation for your sin. Listen to them, follow them, trust in them. I, meanwhile, shall go where I shall see Ba-Iang, and I shall pray Him for you all. Will you make peace?"

Nothing was closer to their wishes than thus to get off scot-free without further terms. Bok Wise therefore sent them to the common-house to pledge the peace in accordance with Ba-Hnar ritual. And when they had done so, he sent word

that they should go home and proclaim the ending of the war; he was, indeed, particularly anxious to get them out of reach of the fury which he feared might, if they were near, break out as soon as he himself should die — in the space of an hour or two at most.

Before being carried into the hut again, he spoke a few words to the Christians who had assembled in great crowds around him. He blessed them and bade them go quickly to the chapel and pray for him all together.

Never had he felt so light-hearted, in all his life. To all intents and purposes, his death meant the ruin of the Mission; there was no other Priest among the Moys, and none, as yet, to spare to them from Annam. And yet God, in this supreme moment, gave him a feeling of such triumph that all his pain and grief and loss and weakness seemed to be carried by Another, while he himself felt exultantly that he was like some mystic seed, buried no doubt, but conscious of the destiny of growth within it. And the source of his assurance in this supreme hour was the ancient letter of the Bishop, who had seen, in God, the triumph, and foretold it in the *labaar*.

When they had laid him in the hut again, he spoke once more to Tot.

"My boy, do not let the Christians grieve over my death. My share is done in the redemption of thy race; it is time to leave the work to others. Be sure to send down word into Annam that I am dead, and that Priests are wanted here; go to them again and again; ask without leaving them any peace—till Priests are sent. And to those who come thou shalt present, in my name, this *labaar*"—and he gave him the worn and yellowed sheet—"which says that there will be, one day, Priests of the Ba-Hnar tribe."

At this moment Tot was called, with insistence, from without. When he returned, he carried in his arms the infant son born to him in that hour of separation.

He brought him close, that the Priest might bless him. But Bok Wise, gathering his strength, called for water to baptize the offspring of his beloved Tot.

And, closing his eyes, he too, saw the vision that had inspired the *labaar*.

"Tot, may thy child be a vessel of election

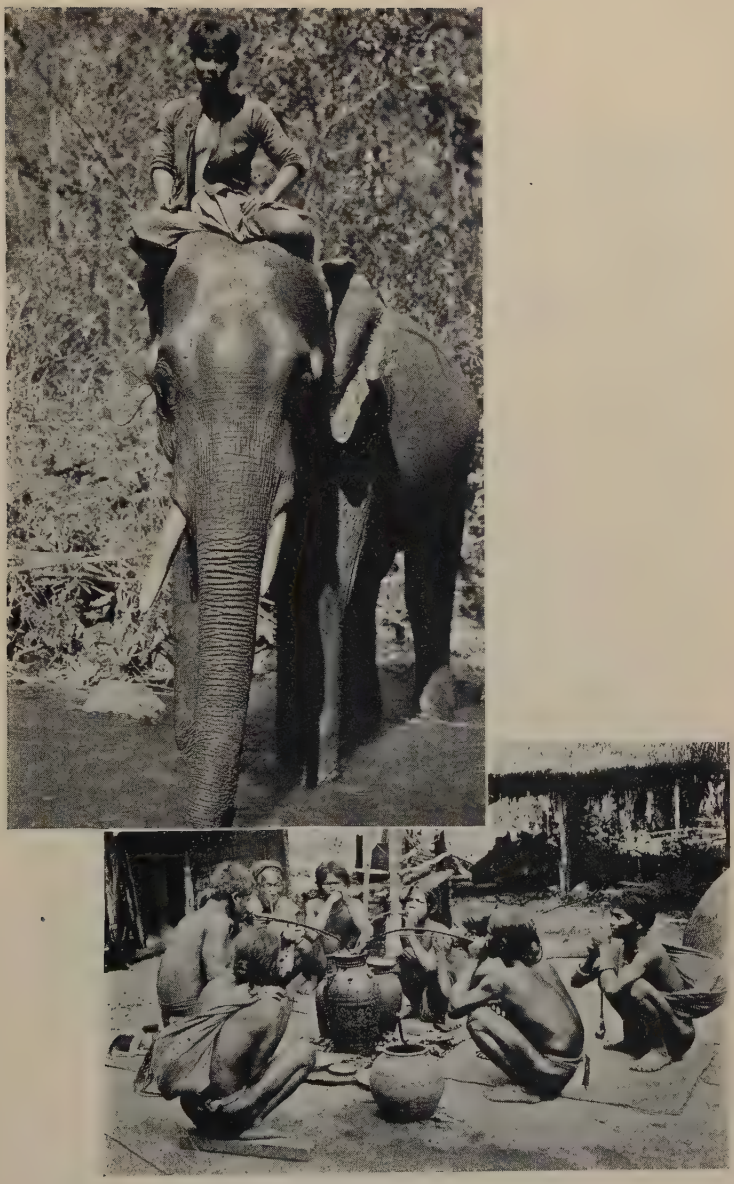
unto many; all will depend upon thy faithfulness."

And then:

"Paul, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Then came a short, stern agony — and death.

PART III



AROUND THE WINE-JAR

THE WOODEN CATHEDRAL OF THE BA-HNAR MISSION, 1925

Chapter XX

THE WORD HE WANTED.

Worn out with the climate and the stress of persecution days, the new Bishop had taken advantage of some business with the Roman Congregations to spend a few weeks of peace in the Foreign Mission Seminary. He had brought with him relics of the martyred priests, the swords and whips and pincers that had been used upon them, their writings and what was left of their bloodstained clothing.

And he had prevailed upon the Directors to start a Hall of Martyrs, where the students could learn, in prayerful contemplation, what was meant by the Missionary Ideal. This plan met with some opposition on the part of those who feared lest the grim prospects which the Hall implied should deter some aspirants from their vocation; but the Bishop was insistent:

"You have no right to fool a boy into the sacrifice of the Missions. Build up within his soul the

image of the Crucified, and then tell him he is going into the continuation of the life that ended on the Cross. He will have to suffer — perhaps as much as these martyrs whose relics I have brought you, perhaps more, in the spirit as well as in the body. Tell him that the Reason for all missionary work is the order: 'Go and preach;' that the Means is pain; and that the End, namely, success and conversion of souls, is a matter which rests with God alone and which does not touch our vocation at all. If they will not take service on those terms, they are not the apostolic men we need."

During his stay at the Foreign Mission Seminary, the Bishop was given as his attendant the Senior Deacon — a type of all that the aspirant to the Mission Field should be.

The two grew as intimate as was possible between a stripling and a veteran. And soon it was agreed between them that the Bishop should ask for this student for his Mission.

One day the Bishop called him, for a long chat. He took him by the arm and marched him up and down the walks under the big trees of the garden, telling him the story we have just told.

Tot, the Bishop added, had come down into the plains to give news of Bok-An's death and to ask for Priests. There were no Priests to spare, and Tot had departed sad. Two months later, a caravan of all Kiem's elephants, laden with produce of the forest, had come to the Bishop's village, headed, again, by Tot. The Moys had clubbed together to send what gifts they could, and they expected that Tot would bring back, upon the elephants, the Priests and the equipment needed by the Mission.

But this had happened just as the Bishop was about to leave for Rome, and hope was again deferred. The Bishop, however, had given Tot a definite promise that he would send at least two Priests at the earliest possible moment. Thereupon Tot had delivered up the *labaar,* as if guessing that it would weigh upon the Bishop's mind until the promise should be fulfilled.

At the end of this long story, the Bishop had confided to the Senior Deacon's secret ear that the Directors had agreed to his proposal.

"We shall make a savage of you yet," he said. "How do you feel about it?"

"I feel anything but savage," answered the

Senior Deacon. "I have nothing to say but Thank you and *Deo gratias.*"

"Very well then, my dear boy"—and the Bishop looked on him with loving eyes—"come to my room and let me christen you."

The Bishop, having been, himself, not with the Ba-Hnars, but in Annam, knew nothing of the language of the tribesmen. But Bok Wise had, with unflagging energy, compiled a dictionary, the precious manuscript of which the Bishop had brought with him. Together the student and the Bishop looked it over, and, finally, discovering the word for "Hope," they agreed that it would be a most inspiring name.

The Bishop rose with due solemnity, took the *labaar* from its leather case, laid his pectoral cross on the shoulder of the youth, and spoke, smiling, yet very earnestly:

"Bok Hope, with this cross I raise thee to the knighthood of the *labaar.* Be brave and faithful; carry the cross I hereby lay upon thee, and fulfil the bidding of the *labaar,* which I confide, for keeping, into thy hands."

Shortly after this momentous interview, the Senior Deacon misbehaved egregiously. He

abstracted the dictionary and, by sitting up two nights, against all the rules, secretly made a perfect copy — and restored the book.

The Bishop left soon after, and, on the way home, was shipwrecked, losing all his property; but nothing did he regret more keenly than the dictionary, that had cost a lifetime of patient toil. So that, when, three months later, Bok Hope arrived, bearing his purloined copy of the work, the Bishop had to admit that "a naughty child is sometimes a practical institution."

With Bok Hope, the Directors had sent out another Priest for the Ba-Hnar Mission, a young man of extraordinary courage, who was known thereafter as Bok Lion.

Two Annamese Priests were also chosen for the Moys, our old friend Dô being the elder and one Thia Si the younger.

Of their journey and their early struggles with the language, of their first acquaintance with the fever, Queen of the Woods, of the frantic explosions of delight with which they were greeted by Christians and Pagans alike, I shall say nothing. Indeed, many of their subsequent experiences were so completely similar to those of their

predecessors that I shall pass them over and let the reader take them all for granted. For now, while not forgetting that the Cross was ever present, it is time for us to see the picking of the fruits it bore.

Chapter XXI

THE HUB OF THAT UNIVERSE.

There was an immensity of work awaiting the new Missioners. Every village had to be visited and spiritually overhauled; catechumenates had to be established; the pagan communities had to be sounded, one by one.

What impressed itself at once upon Bok Hope was the lack of native helpers. The Annamese were, no doubt, most useful; but, on the one hand, they were no better off than the white men in regard to familiarity with the language and customs of the Moys; and, on the other, the immense and childish arrogance of the Oriental, who is usually a coward and a bully, was apt to irritate the manly, independent spirit of the woodsmen and to make them, on occasions, utterly unmanageable.

Hence the idea of a school for Catechists became the central one round which all plans revolved in the Ba-Hnar Mission at this stage.

The difficulties were enormous, and Bok Hope,

for a year or two, was kept busy with preliminaries. It was only after the arrival of Bok Tree, sent up specially by the Bishop for the purpose, that the Mother of Good Counsel School was at last opened, in the village of Ro-Hai.

The main problem was that of getting pupils. The wild foxes of the forest would have been more easily tamed than those laddies, in whose souls the breath of freedom blew like the unfettered wind at whose capricious touch the jungle moans and laughs and chatters. For them the twittering of a bird, the chirping of a lizard, the call of a deer — or the glad revel of the sunlight even — had an attraction so imperious that, in a moment, all would be forgotten except that the forest claimed its own and would not be denied.

The slavery of their taboos had not in any way prepared them for the discipline of school, and, in almost every case, months elapsed before the notion of regularity began to enter their little heads.

The school was, of course, a boarding-school. The most promising boys from each village were sent in, with the idea that they should be taught to read and write and count, that they should be

thoroughly grounded in religious knowledge, and that, thus lifted above the level of the rest, they should go back to the villages, and, while living in all things the common life, teach the children and represent the Priest.

But to the Moy it looked as if the Missioners, in thus taking children from their homes, were importing a new kind of slavery; and just as it has never even yet been possible to get a Moy who would cook or perform any other servile duty for the Mission, so it was only by dint of endless patience that the school idea secured their toleration.

During the first years, almost every child, at one time or another (and some at regular intervals) ran out into the forest, and sped home — and all the resources of patient zeal did not always avail to bring them back again.

And yet God knows with what leniency they were treated. Punishment was almost a thing unknown; Bok Tree, indeed, from the very start, undertook to expiate in his own flesh the faults of his little boys, and, when anything was wrong, he would rise at night from his hard boards and perform the penances of the Saints; his life was

one of startling vigor, regardless of the climate —and, very shortly, his influence on the boys was such that he performed miracles of transformation.

The point on which most petty troubles arose was that of clothing, and the days on which a more elaborate outfit was insisted on were days of woe. Consolation, however, was available in that on those same days the boys were sent out, in groups, into the forest, and were allowed to bring home whatever birds or beasts, reptiles or insects, roots or berries, they could secure with bow and arrow or stick and fingers, and to prepare the same as a welcome extra to the *ordinaire* of the school.

Another attraction was the band, both the noise and the harmony of which enraptured the savage breast. Indeed, such is the attraction of music for the Moys that it very soon became the policy of the school to teach the entire catechism, prayers and rule of life in rude verse, to the tune of suitable hymns.

After a few short years of struggling, the Mother of Good Counsel School had an average of a hundred boys in attendance and produced a

score of young Catechists each year; with time their training was perfected, especially as very soon there began coming in boys who had learned at home all that these Catechists could teach them, and the school was called upon to take them further afield.

So that now each village has a number of well-equipped and willing teachers, and no child in the Mission grows up without the instruction that is its due. And this enterprise is one that deserves the attention of every Missionary Society, of every Mission and of every Missioner — also their imitation.

Chapter XXII

HERE WE ARE AT LAST.

Meanwhile Bok Hope and Bok Lion were organizing the villages. It will be remembered that, in the early days, Bok Short had refused to take his little band of Christians out of the pagan villages to start a settlement of their own. But now the Christians were numerous enough to subsist alone, and it was rightly expected that the prosperity of their community would soon prove an attraction great enough to secure a constant stream of pagans wishing to join with them.

Accordingly each of the Priests set out in search of a suitable location for his village and his fields. The wild woods were no man's property, and the pioneers could help themselves.

In November, when there begins a respite of four months from the rains and fevers, they began the enterprise. In the first year they had no choice but to follow the mode of cultivation

practised by the Moys; long days were spent in hewing the giant trees to clear the land, and in the evening the great logs were hauled home to the village site. "Home" is not quite accurate —for there were no houses built for several months; it was only after the rice had been duly planted that attention was turned to necessary shelters.

The first house to be erected was the common-house, which I have described before and need not call again to the admiration of the reader. Then came a chapel, combined with a residence for the Priest; next the granaries; and finally the village.

The Priest's household consisted of some twenty Annamese, who, some out of zeal and some out of poverty, had offered their services to the Mission. Their presence was necessary in view of the refusal of the Moys to do any work that contradicted their ideas of liberty; and the number of the Annamese, which may seem a useless burden, is explained by the fact that, half of them being usually down with fever, a large reserve of hands was always needed to ensure a quorum in activity.

Besides the Annamese, there were always many Moys whom the Missioners had redeemed from slavery. From Laotia, to the westward, caravans were forever coming to buy slaves in the Moy country. And war was seldom waged to kill, but often to secure slaves from the enemy and sell them into exile. The price per "head" of slaves varied from five to seven buffaloes, so that redeeming them was an expensive business, and the Missioners always chose children who were, on the one hand, less costly, and on the other, more apt to be a credit to Christianity.

A buffalo, in local currency, was equivalent to seven ordinary wine jars; two wine jars could be exchanged for one cauldron; four cauldrons would buy a horse. As for an elephant, it was rated at the value of ten to fifteen slaves. Small change was represented by salt and rice and beads and cotton and tin. The uncomfortable part of this system of exchange is that, when travelling, you have to carry all kinds of different articles, in order to be able to meet the requirements of each particular savage; if you try to pay a carrier in beads when he wants a jar, you get into hot water with all his kith and kin.

Besides the human beings, there was in each station a large "personnel" of pigs and goats and cattle, horses, buffaloes and at least one elephant.

Elephants could be obtained on easy terms from the forest hunters. These valuable animals were used for a year or two in hauling logs and in other heavy work around the Mission, and were then sold to the government of Annam. The proceeds were devoted to the purchase and importation of agricultural implements, especially ploughs, which were used as soon as the tree-stumps had been removed.

The superstition of the Moys made them regard the use of bullocks for this work as sacrilegious. And indeed they have not to this day been able to explain how, in spite of this sin, the Christians get magnificent crops while they themselves are tearing their scant livelihood from the hillsides with their naked hands.

The cattle kept by the Moys are chiefly buffaloes for sacrificial purposes. These ungainly creatures, slow and stupid, are sent out into the woods to graze, under the care of the little boys, who have to keep them from the rice-fields. Often you will meet one shuffling along supinely,

its nose in the air, its long horns close to its body on either side, and, on its back, a little black Moy, asleep. They are great friends, these two; many a time the buffaloes have faced the wild beasts in defence of their little guardians; and when, as sometimes happens, the buffalo is seized with a sudden fury and goes plunging heavily through the thickets, the voice of a man will madden it, but the voice of its little keeper will soothe it and bring it home in safety. But the prettiest picture of all is that of the buffalo swimming a deep river, with its nose alone showing above the water, and, a yard behind, the dark head of the little rider wreathed in happy smiles.

After the hard day's work, in the foundation of the Christian settlements, all would come home to rest. Then the Father would hold court and patch up the little quarrels of the day. There was sometimes quite a little difficulty in effecting an understanding between the Annamese and the Moys, in particular in the matter of theft. The Annamese, like the Indian, is born and bred a thief; it may be said of him, as it was of a certain Missioner of my acquaintance who was sent out begging, that "nothing is safe from him unless

it is nailed down," whereas the Moy regards a thief as a menace to existence; not only that, but, according to the jurisprudence of the Moys, the theft of a handful of rice or of a pinch of salt is punished with exile and slavery; whereas to steal a valuable gong is a much lighter matter, first because it is at once discovered, and secondly because it constitutes an assault upon well-being only, and not on being, already threatened by so many foes in the wild habitat of the Moys.

Then would come the instruction of the children and the neophytes, followed by evening prayers. After the houses had been built, each family would say the evening prayers at home, and it would be a charming experience to pass, at nightfall, within earshot of a Christian village; the sweet melody of the gongs, mingled with the singing of the catechism and the cadence of the prayers, would rise upon the wind, with a message of unfathomable hope, passing to gratitude at the thought of the victory of grace achieved, albeit through much pain, in a few short years.

Chapter XXIII

O THOU EXACTING LOVE!

One night Bok Hope was sitting out under the giant trees, resting after a busy day. His heart was full of the peace which the big things of nature breed in man when he gives himself over to their influence. The virgin forest, in particular, like the Alpine peaks, frees the spirit from all the fetters of convention and crowds the solitude with all deep cravings and high aspirations, till God comes down to take the place that none but He can fill in the human heart.

Pondering over the sure triumph of the Faith, Bok Hope saw, ready to his hand, a simile that touched him to the quick. There was a massive tree that shot up into the moonlit sky, aged and strong and seemingly unconquerable. And at its base a little creeper, whose tendrils ran hither and thither along the ground, till one of them had met the tree and had begun to wind itself among the deep creases of the bark. He knew that the

thread-like body would climb round and up till it found a resting-place among the boughs. Then would the rootlets issue from the stem and take firm hold; the creeper would divide and scale the further heights in double spiral, and, as it grew in strength, would pierce the bark more deeply and take the sap from the tree's own heart. Thus nourished, it would itself grow hard and firm, cease to be a weed and become wood. It would fill in the gaps between the network it had made upon the tree, smothering and crushing out the giant's life and substituting its own with more and more abundance. Then would the leaves wither and shrink and fall, and the dark green foliage of the creeper take its place, until at last, when years had sped, in spite of wind and rain and storm, nay, the more surely for wind and rain and storm, a new tree, stronger, larger, greener than the first, would offer shelter, shade, protection and companionship to all that moved in the forest-world.

And so the Faith, coming at first in weakness into the savage haunts, would, from the heart of a decayed and gasping superstition, lift, in God's own time, its proud triumphant boughs to

heaven, and extend to earth below the tenderness of its eternal strength.

This was the evening of a First Communion day, several years after Bok Hope's arrival, when the settlements were an accomplished fact and the Mother of Good Counsel School the mainspring of the Mission.

Bok Hope was musing over this alluring parable, when a little hand was laid upon his arm, and Paul, the son of Tot, stood at his side. Paul had made his First Communion that day and should, by this time, have been fast asleep.

"Bok Hope," he said, "tell me a story."

"Good little boys have no business out of their homes during the night," replied the Priest.

"Oh!" said the child — an inexpressible world was in that Oh! — "How can I sleep — to-night?"

Bok Hope took him upon his knees. "Tell me about it, Paul," he said.

"All day I have been thinking of the *labaar,*" ventured the boy. "My father has told me of it often, and my mother thinks that ——"

"That what?"

"She thinks Ba-Iang can do wonderful things.

But I want you to tell me the story of the *labaar* again, because I want to work for it. Since this morning I am sure that I can do — something."

So Bok Hope told of the vision of the martyred Bishop, of the faithful struggles of Bok Wise and his companions, of the early days of woe and, now, the days of triumph. And he said how all the workers of the *labaar* were sure that one day there would be men of the Ba-Hnar tribe offering to God the one sacrifice which alone gave meaning to all the rest.

He could feel the child thrilling with a deep, consuming faith, as the tears dropped silently on the hand that held him. It was easy to foresee the end.

"Bok Hope, why cannot I be the first?" said Paul. "I can learn, I can suffer — and I *do* love the God who comes into our hearts!"

And so it came about that Paul was sent into Annam, for a long exile of a dozen years, to study.

Chapter XXIV

A SPOILED OUTING.

Soon after these events the struggle began again, in a new form. The neighboring tribes grew jealous and began a series of incursions into the Ba-Hnar villages, securing slaves and booty.

We have said that Bok Lion was a man of exceptional courage. His fame was already great among the Moys, owing to several exploits in the jungle. He now proposed to found a village right on the path of the Jarai warriors, to repress their growing insolence.

While he was doing so, a surprise attack was managed so adroitly by the enemy that three of his workers were carried off to slavery. A Jarai warrior, however, fell into the hands of the Ba-Hnars.

To this man Bok Lion gave the following message for his fellows:

"Your three prisoners are of the household of

Bok Lion. If they have done you an injustice, explain yourselves; if not, send them back at once."

Never had the Jarai received a message of this kind and they argued that the first man who dared to challenge them would dare more if they were obstinate—and they sent back the prisoners. From that moment, the reputation of Bok Lion was such that all kinds of superstitions grew up around his name.

He became the arbiter of inter-tribe disputes—a standing never held by anyone before him. And his position was made definitely secure when, on one occasion, he accepted a mission, the like of which was undreamed of in the warfare of the Moys. A Ba-Hnar village had, for many years, held prisoners two men of another tribe, as compensation for damage inflicted by the enemy. These men one day suggested that Bok Lion should go and ask their tribe to pay its debt and so redeem the captives. The Ba-Hnars made every opposition to the attempt; for they were sure that Bok Lion would be instantly seized and help captive by the foe.

He went, however, and so pleased were the

chiefs with his confidence in their good faith, that not only did they agree to all his terms, but feasted him unceasingly for three days, every family insisting that he "drink wine" with all its members.

His power once admitted, he was enabled to prevent a number of feuds from breaking out. For if war, among the Moys, is not a very terrible affair, it is frequent in proportion. If a stranger passes through a village with any covering on his head and if, after his passing, it happens to rain when rain is not desired, then the village of the offender must either pay a fine or else settle the claim by war. Or, again, the touching without leave of any object in the common-house by a chance traveller is cause enough for bloodshed.

Bok Lion, therefore, was constituted Justice of the Peace among the Moys, and settled *à l'amiable* many a *casus belli.*

There remained one tribe, however, the Ho-Drong, that was forever troubling the southern villages of the Ba-Hnars, and he was anxious to pacify this quarter too. An occasion came to hand after another spell of smallpox which devastated all the tribes.

On this occasion vaccine was available, and the Missioners went from village to village of the Ba-Hnar tribe, safeguarding their people.

Nevertheless many cases prevailed, the care of which called for heroic charity. Bok Lion tells of leaning over the prostrate figures to catch the whispered words, of sitting in the filth beside them and seeking vainly for a healthy spot on which to practice the last anointing, while the pus flowed at every touch of the swollen skin. Only once, however, was he overcome—and he soon grew hardened to every horror.

No savage would travel in the daytime at this period, lest the Iang should see him and take possession. But if once a Moy came in contact with a case of the disease, he would cease all precautions, because the Iang had seen him and would get him anyway; the game was up.

Hence, during the epidemic, every village was of course barred, not only against men, but against the Spirits themselves. And when Bok Lion arrived on his errand of mercy, he had to talk for many hours across the palisades before he could secure an entry. In many cases, it was only after he had undertaken the legal responsi-

bility for any death occurring among those he was to treat, that his ministrations were accepted at all.

When all was over, the toll was found to be much less heavy where the Missioners had worked, and especially among the Christians — so that the old calumnies were revived, and the Ho-Drong became intolerable in their ferocity.

Bok Lion therefore undertook an expedition to pacify them once for all.

Before starting out, a farewell revel was held in the common-house, to witness a scene enacted by an ancient warrior, to the sound of gongs.

A large drum is hung in the centre of the room, to represent the enemy; the warrior, armed with a long drumstick, executes a war dance, while the young men march round him, striking their gongs in harmony.

First the warrior steps boldly, marching fearlessly to the enemy's land. As he reaches it he shows signs of growing caution; soon he bends low, following the trail. Suddenly, with a muffled cry, he halts, at the sight of a camp-fire, with its embers glowing still; he probes it with his stick and hastens forward.

Now he sees the enemy, but is not seen. A few steps nearer, and then, with a war cry that calls the forest into life, he leaps to the assault. His shield held high, he smites upon the drum with rhythmic energy, until at last the enemy has fallen, and the victor stands, for a moment, with his sword poised over the prostrate form.

Hereupon the music changes to a cascade of notes, like a peal of laughter, and all take up the pæan.

And the victory thus achieved is celebrated in a general and generous distribution of chickens' legs and wine.

More serious preparations were then begun, the march was ordered, and, on the second night, camp was established in contact with the enemy.

Camp at night in the wild woods offers a spectacle altogether charming, apart from the grim business of war.

The camp-fires show the dark outlines of the sleeping men and the dim silhouettes of the sentries on the outskirts of the glade. From the undergrowth, a million eyes peep out, dewdrops reflecting the leaping flame, or perhaps, as imagination is alert, the cruel eyes of tigers on the watch.

The elephants are tied, by their tails, to a tall tree, secure from all attack of man or beast. And they keep better watch than all the sentinels, for their small, attentive eyes are ever open and the least scent alarms them; and, as they sway on their four pillars to distribute their enormous weight, the ceaseless shuffling of their feet breaks the oppressive silence.

On account of the wild beasts it is usually safer to keep away from lakes and rivers; but the camp needs water, and gets it by the following device. In a clump of young bamboos the central stems are cut away, the other stems are tied together at the very top, and a big stone is hung so that the stems are bent low to a central point. So heavy is the dew that it runs down the stems and fills the vessels placed beneath.

Bok Lion sent word to the Ho-Drong, through a prisoner captured in one of their previous raids, that he was tired of their incursions, that if they would not give full guarantees for the future, he would burn their villages. This was entirely contrary to Moy procedure, which would have caused him to come up in the night, do the burning without notice, and retire. The talking would come

later. But Bok Lion rightly expected that, thus challenged, the Ho-Drong would attack first and meanwhile he could prepare for their reception leisurely.

No sooner had word reached them than the Ho-Drong arose and determined to forestall attack. They started out, three hundred strong; but the birds sang so constantly on the wrong side that the expedition was deferred.

On the advice of the witches, the night of the new moon was now chosen for the attack; a stronger party than the last set out, with victory in their hearts; they had come more than half the distance to the Ba-Hnar camp when a tiger strode out from beneath the trees and crossed their path; so fatal was this omen that again the party went home, having gained nothing but the poetic pleasure of a midnight walk.

A few days later, an army of five hundred, having invoked such charms that even the omens would not deter them, sallied forth to exterminate the Christians. At their head marched a resplendent chieftain, bearing the *tieudep*, a horn which serves the purpose of a standard. They almost reached the camp; indeed, the sound of their ap-

proach caused one of the elephants to break its ropes. The animal made off in the direction of the sound, and planted itself upon the trail. Rounding a bend, the warriors came, in the moonlight, upon this massive shapeless barrier. The leaders fell back a step, and the shock went down the line, causing unutterable confusion. In a moment they had all learned that the leaders had been confronted with the soul of Bok Lion, which was out watching while he slept, and that this soul was so terrific — with so oppressive a radiance around it — that opposition was not to be attempted.

They therefore sent word that Bok Lion need not trouble to burn their villages, as they were ready to give all security for the maintenance of peace. And from that day forward there was no more danger from that quarter.

Chapter XXV

ANOTHER LITTLE DRINK.

Bok Lion had occasion to use diplomacy rather than courage in a crisis that occurred soon after this.

It will have been observed that the Ba-Hnars are over-fond of millet wine. There are festive days when they do nothing else but drink. Now the Missioners began to notice a tendency to take advantage of the Sunday rest to indulge in the prevalent abuse.

One Easter Sunday, Bok Hope heard his villagers making high festival in a way that was, to say the least, extra-liturgical. He sent the oldest of his Catechists (a boy of twenty) to tell the head-men that a sacred festival should be better spent. The boy returned, in tears, with an insolent reply.

Now, Bok Hope was deadly tired. The exertions of Holy Week, the fever and the noise of the drums and gongs had combined to put his

nerves on edge. He knew perfectly well that he was going to break the Ba-Hnar law, but he was in that state, not uncommon in the tropics, when one *must* break *something*, or explode.

He jumped up, seized a cane, ran to the common-house, and, in a voice of thunder, ordered the revellers out. Nine-tenths of them obeyed, and, in half a minute, he was alone with perhaps a dozen who still sat squatting round the jars. They were all drunk.

He renewed his order, and one or two tried to struggle to their feet; the others began grumbling at the disturbance. At last the only young man present, the others being all men who had come to the Faith in adult life, spoke out:

"Why does Bok Hope disturb the Moys? Let him go home and say his prayers."

The Missioners had suffered everything in their apostolate, and now things were going smoothly. This was the first sign of that reaction, from prosperity, which was bound to come.

Bok Hope did what any human being would have done — and did right. He brought down his cane with a stinging swish on the buttocks of the drunken lad.

Now the Ba-Hnar Christians, in the last few years, had been freed from war; they had been settled in villages where plenty reigned; they had been raised above the hand-to-mouth existence of their fathers. And the consequence was that they were restless. The Missioners had noticed a subtle change in their behavior, but had not yet probed it to its depth. Now they were confronted with a phenomenon which, for all its frequency, causes, each time, a shock to one's trust in human nature. A general apostasy set in.

In village after village the news of the blow, madly exaggerated, set fire to the latent desire for the wild life of the forest; the restraints of religion were thrown off and its practices abandoned.

From a distance such a commotion may be viewed quite calmly as a necessary moral measles in an infant Mission. But to the mother and father of the infant, the matter is one of appalling seriousness, especially as to them (the Missioners, I mean) the base ingratitude and the sin of individual souls looms large and crushes deeply.

Within two months, however, the excitement had died down and the Moys felt like naughty

children after an escapade. They dared not go to Bok Hope, but went instead to the arbiter, Bok Lion, and begged his intervention.

They recognized their excesses at the jar and required that Bok Hope should recognize his misuse of the cane. Mutual apologies and presents would then secure the peace.

This was agreed to readily and Bok Hope, pocketing his pride (not to say his sense of distributive justice), was pleased to act the part of one who had done injury; he knew that by no other means could he "save the face" of the villagers before the tribe.

After this ceremony, all who were seriously Christian resumed their duties with new zest. And all the "half-baked," little by little in the course of a generation or so, came back also, at least to die.

In the midst of this trouble, Bok Hope had written to the Carmelite in Aix who was still praying and doing penance for the Ba-Hnar Mission, and his letter had been black with the shadow of the storm. Before telling the conclusion of this story it is my duty to bring home to the reader, by quoting that letter and the reply,

what is the real force behind the Missioner in the field.

The hand of Providence has not been hidden, as, throughout these pages, our heroes have escaped from danger, conquered opposition and secured results. And it is fitting here to say that there is not one of them but is glad of every chance to say how he has been braced by the letters from Convents of Contemplatives at home and how he is convinced that his escapes from every kind of peril in his many wanderings have been bought by the merit of the cloister.

Chapter XXVI

THE BETTER PART.

My Dear Sister Mary Rose of the Incarnation:

May the Lord's peace be yours forever.

Did you ever hear of a place called Heaven, where people love God and serve Him in perpetual joy? I have some kind of reminiscence in my mind that once upon a time I thought that this poor earth of ours — and the Ba-Hnar Mission even — was a very good substitute for such a place, for a little while.

But today I write in quite another mood. I have no use at all for anything on earth, and I want, with consuming need, a place of rest. And oh! how good it is to be able to pour out into your heart the trouble of my own, sure that all will be changed, on the altar of your zeal, into a wreath of prayer, and, thence, a shower of grace.

But first let me speak about yourself. Do not for a moment feel the burden of your chosen cross. You are no prisoner; your cloister is a

rampart only, and, at that, wide open to the sky and to the multitudinous life above; but the busy running to and fro of men is held at bay and cannot trample your liberated soul. Moreover, that same sacrifice of yours, rewarded already in your peace, receives a further guerdon in the safety of your little brothers on the Mission, who are kept, for your sakes, from all the dangers of their devious ways.

Again, you are free from the torture of men's waywardness. Doubtless you weep at your own shortcomings, you condole with Him whose Heart is bruised by sinners — but oh! you do not see those sinners at their work and are not held responsible for them to God — and so you can breathe in joy the living breezes of your mountain-tops, you can do penance without being dragged down to the level of those for whom you offer it.

Be merry, then, and rejoice; pray without ceasing; and hold us by the hand.

In my previous letters I told you of the great progress that God was pleased to grant us in this work from the first day of our new effort. It was, I felt, the reward of the heroism of those

who went before us. And now He is pleased to have us earn some progress for ourselves; He has sent His Cross.

Indeed, He has sent it so heavy that it is well-nigh crushing us. There is a general movement of apostasy that threatens to submerge the Mission — and I write, begging you on bended knees to storm Heaven for our deliverance. And my own woe is tenfold, for I am the cause of all the trouble.

[Here Bok Hope goes on to tell the story of the Easter drinking and of his action to repress it; then of the results.]

Such is the new horror that has come upon our Mission. It was time, no doubt, that we should learn to follow in the footsteps of our elders — but oh! for the courage that was theirs.

Personally I have two consolations: Tot and his wife are one of them, and the other is the *labaar*.

Your Carmel knows all about the *labaar*. It has inspired you as well as me, for a generation. And my heart is full of gratitude, in this dark hour, for its words of hope. "Trust in Him, even in the most desperate moments; offer your trials to hasten the final consummation."

But how does *this* trial hasten anything? A general apostasy! I wonder if the martyred Bishop saw this too.

"Remember, you are fighting a winning battle, like our Lord on Calvary. Do not be afraid to use the arms He sharpened nor to share the wounds He bore."

Yes, He won the battle, though his friends had run away and left Him.

Along with my distress I have good news for you. My little Paul, the son of Tot, has asked to be a Priest; he is ambitious to fulfil the *labaar*. "The day will come when He will call the children of that race even to His Royal Priesthood."

Now the boy is altogether worthy. His mother has instructed him splendidly in his religion and his father has made a man of him already. But the difficulties before him are very great, and I ask you to make him the object of your special care.

He went down, six months ago, to the Seminary in Annam. He was not there a day before his whole heart yearned for the deep woods and the mountain air. It was weeks before he could endure the food, months before he knew the lan-

guage. And all the while those heartless little Annamese made him suffer a good deal; I am glad to say that a couple of the worst got a proper tanning and that Paul soon found the trick for keeping on good terms all round.

The Latin is almost killing him, but he is pious and determined, so that his masters are full of hope. Your prayers and ours will see him through, please God.

And now, my dear Sister, let me trouble your solitude no longer. I have peopled it with tears and hopes, which I know you will change into the Lord's own will.

God bless you and keep you ever.

Your grateful brother in His love,

BOK HOPE.

My dear Bok Hope:

May the Grace of the Holy Ghost be in your soul for evermore.

Your letter of last year took several months to come, and this will reach you, God knows when.

I have no doubt that long before that day our blessed Lord will have Himself consoled you far more deeply than any words of mine could ever avail to do.

It was a real delight to be made the confidant of all your troubles. For indeed I do not like to weary God with ceaseless lamentations, and He has put our hearts in contact in order that we may help each other. Far better to complain lower down than higher up, especially when our pain is met with so directly in His service.

Besides, the thought of your suffering is a stimulant to me. Whenever any little cross appears, quickly I offer it for you, only too happy if I can help you, however little it may be.

I *know* that your next letter will give better news, that the cloud which overhung your last will have blown away. How could Satan see the Mission taking such strides towards God, without making some new effort to check the forward motion? But as he has been defeated at every turn before, so he will fail again — I only pray that the days may be shortened, for the elect, and, most of all, for you.

And, pending the return of the days of prog-

ress, I pray, most constantly, that a more and more devouring zeal may burn within your soul, a zeal such that it may be the echo of the zeal of Jesus and may incline His heart to you. The cry of thirst still breaks from the Crucified; happy indeed are they who receive the legacy of thirst and are consumed with eagerness to quench it with the gift of souls.

Do you pray also that your sister in the Carmel may be likewise zealous. It will be altogether to your interest, for, if God deigns to lean down to my poor soul, I shall not fail to remind Him of your Mission's needs. They say that to pray for a Carmelite is to pray, indirectly, for the Church — and so I count on a greater share than ever in your prayers, though I know you pray for me already.

You speak again of the *labaar;* yes, indeed, we know it in this Carmel; for not only have we always had a Sister praying for the Ba-Hnar Mission, but, when the Bishop was at home, before your ordination, he brought it here for us to see; and well do I remember with what veneration we handled it, and kissed it, as the relic of a martyr and the charter of *our* Mission.

The agony which you were suffering when last you wrote is proof enough that you are in the true tradition. Not yet have you emerged from the forest of crosses which the martyred Bishop spoke of to Thia Dô; but you are treading the path foretold long since and making safely towards the goal foreseen. Nor will I let you blame yourself; an occasion is not a cause — and the devil only wanted an occasion.

What you say of Paul has awakened all that is in me of apostolic hope. You can guess how earnestly I shall pray for him and offer all I can that he may have courage, faith and perseverance. He will be my Little Brother and I shall speak of him unceasingly to his Master and my Own.

Yet allow me, dear Father, one word more in his regard. Should it please the Lord to have him fail, should hope be deferred again, do not lose heart. "You are fighting a winning battle," but that the victory should come in your generation or in the next, what is that to you? Carry on the tradition of patient toil; and let the Lord take care of the rest, for it is not for us to know the time nor the moments which the Father has appointed in His power.

Take heart, and bear the burden of your Knighthood with the unflinching courage of the high-souled men who went before you. We in the Carmel shall be one with you in fervent prayer for the final overthrowing of the Lie.

Your unworthy sister and
servant in the Lord
SISTER MARY ROSE OF THE INCARNATION.

Chapter XXVII

THE END OF THE BEGINNING.

And now The Day has come. An escort of a hundred men has been sent down to the frontier of Annam, with elephants and horses, to bring the Bishop up into the hills.

Every Christian village of the Moys is decked and garlanded; paths and even roads are being opened up between them; the chapels are being renewed, the bullocks fattened; the Catechists are, with frenzied zeal, drilling the little boys and girls in catechism; the old warrior is practising his war dance, sure that the Bishop will request him to perform it; and the School Band is making life intolerable for the world at large.

The Missioners are tired out and happy,—for weeks they have been preparing old and young for confirmation; and now all is ready for the arrival of the first Bishop who ever came among the Moys.

In the Bishop's party are several of the Mis-

sioners from Annam who have taken a short holiday to assist at the triumphal scene; there are two new Priests for the Ba-Hnar Mission — and there is Paul.

His course was ended and he was coming home. Among the Annamese at the Seminary he had not shone with any lustre; indeed it was only by dint of coaching and indulgence that he had been able to master all his studies; the Latin that was so different from the monosyllables of his mother tongue, the Philosophy that so nimbly gave an account of things and seemed to escape when he thought it in his grasp, the Theology that turned his brain into a melting-pot of fascinating dreams. But there was one point in which he outstripped many, and that was Faith. Even among boys whose fathers wore the branding that proclaimed their faithfulness, the son of the wild woodlands shone as an example of trustful abandonment to Providence — for was he not also the son of the *labaar,* that monument of certainty that the word of God would never pass away?

Paul was a Deacon and was to be ordained Priest at home, before an altar built in the open air, where all the Christian population of the woods could see the consecration of their own.

The Moys believe in ghosts — and surely if, on that occasion, they thought they saw Bok Wise, Bok Short, Hmur, Hmon and Pat and Lam and all the Faithful of the *labaar* join with the Priests who placed their hands upon the head of Paul during his ordination, they were not far wrong.

In the afternoon Thia Paul, with his own hands, placed the *labaar,* in a golden frame, over the altar of the chapel in the Mother of Good Counsel School, until an occasion should offer of sending it as a thank-offering to the Carmel in Aix, where it would stir up prayer and sacrifice to meet all future needs.

In the evening after Benediction, the Bishop spoke to the Missioners, from the fullness of his heart.

"My beloved Messengers of Christ:

"This is a dawn for which many sighs have paid, a triumph granted unto blood — human blood pressed out of human hearts through many years.

"Oh! Praised be the loving God who made it, that we might exult in it and rejoice.

"I have no words in which to speak to you of this choice blessing and this unutterable consolation. A Saint foretold it, many Saints lived and toiled and suffered and died and prayed for it. Others have labored and we have entered into their labor. Thanks be to God, Amen.

"But this is, at most, a birth and a beginning. Let us take heart. The field is yellowing to the harvest; behold the dawn so long expected — let us gird up our loins and set ourselves to the day's work, willing and strong, in the service of One to whom we know that it is safe for us ever to commit our way, for He will bring it about.

"Indeed and indeed is this abandonment into the Hands of Providence the keynote of the missionary life. You and I can offer; you and I can work; you and I can suffer; our cloistered sisters can pray; our benefactors can pour out the lavish gifts of Christian charity — but God alone, our King, our Jesus, can achieve His ends, by what instruments He chooses and by what means He wills.

"Go, my Paul, unto thy people. Thou art the

anointed of the Lord, the seal of His love for them, the promise of His Salvation. Be worthy of His gift. In simplicity of faith and gratitude, do thy part and sow the seed. Stand loyally in line with these thy teachers who have brought forth thy priesthood amid agonizing tears. And may His blessing be upon thee and upon thine, Who died for all upon the Cross and Who holds our hands in all we do for Him.

"I give thee, as thy friend and mentor, the one of us who alone has lived this life from the beginning, the one whose ears received the interpretation of the *labaar,* Thia Dô; follow him in all his ways.

"Be patient — work, endure and trust. Such is the lesson of the *labaar.* Learn it well and I promise that the Lie will perish from the land."

THE END